



# The Force of Union: Affect and Ascent in the Theology of Bonaventure

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## The Force of Union: Affect and Ascent in the Theology of Bonaventure

## Abstract

The image of love as a burning flame is so widespread in the history of Christian literature as to appear inevitable. But as this dissertation explores, the association of *amor* with fire played a precise and wide-ranging role in Bonaventure's understanding of the soul's motive power--its capacity to love and be united with God, especially as that capacity was demonstrated in an exemplary way through the spiritual ascent and death of St. Francis.

In drawing out this association, Bonaventure develops a theory of the soul and its capacity for transformation in union with God that gives specificity to the Christian desire for self-abandonment in God and the annihilation of the soul in union with God. Though Bonaventure does not use the language of the soul coming to nothing, he describes a state of ecstasy or *excessus mentis* that is possible in this life, but which constitutes the death and transformation of the soul in union with God. In this ecstatic state, the boundaries between the soul and God--between active and passive, mover and moved, will and necessity--are effectively consumed in the fire of union.

This dissertation offers a new approach to the role of affect in Bonaventure's theology through three lenses: his elaboration of the soul's union with God as inspired by the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite; Bonaventure's conception of *synderesis* or the soul's natural affective "weight" or inclination to God; and the ecstatic death of the soul that Bonaventure describes in

the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* and which is witnessed in the body of St. Francis in the *Legenda Maior*. This dissertation argues that Bonaventure's "affective" gloss on the Dionysian corpus was not an interpolation but a working out of the Dionysian conception of *eros*. In elaborating the soul's natural motion to the good, moreover, Bonaventure situates divine desire within an Aristotelian cosmos. And as the manifestation of this desire in Francis's dying body makes evident, for Bonaventure *affectus* plays at the boundary of body and spirit and names a force that is more fundamental than the distinction between the corporeal and incorporeal.

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## Introduction: The Seraphic Doctrine

### 1. *The Cosmic Body of St. Francis*

In a sermon given at the Franciscan house in Paris on the feast day of Francis of Assisi in 1262,<sup>1</sup> Bonaventure explains the significance of the figure of the Seraph that appeared to Francis shortly before his death and branded him with the marks of Christ's passion:

Why do we, being so wretched, have such cold hearts that we will not endure anything for the sake of our Lord? Our hearts do not burn or boil with love. For just as heat is a property of the heart, and when this heat is greater a person's actions are stronger and more robust, so too one who has more of the heat of love or charity in their heart is for this reason able to perform more virtuous deeds. Do you want to imprint Christ crucified in your heart? Do you wish to transform yourself into him so much that you burn with charity? Just as iron, when it is heated to the point of melting, can be imprinted with any form or image, so too a heart burning with the love of Christ crucified is imprinted with the crucified Christ or the cross, and the lover is carried over or transformed into the Crucified, just as the blessed Francis was. Some people are amazed that a Seraphim was sent to him when the stigmata of Christ's passion were to be imprinted upon him. Surely, they say, no Seraphim was crucified! No, but the Seraphim is the spirit whose name means 'ardor', which signifies that Francis was burning with charity when the Seraphim was sent to him. And the cross or the sign of the cross imprinted upon his body signifies the affection which he had for the crucified Christ, and that, from the ardor of his love, he was wholly transformed into Christ.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ignatius Brady established the date of 1262 on the basis of several verbatim correspondences with Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior* of that same year, but this dating is not universally accepted. See Regis Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann, and William Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*: vol. 2, *The Founder* (New York: New City Press, 2000), 718. J. F. Quinn argues for a dating of 1269 in "Chronology of St. Bonaventure's Sermons," *Archivum franciscanum historicum* 67 (1974), 145-84. This sermon appears as the fourth sermon on St. Francis in the Quaracchi edition of Bonaventure's *Opera Omnia* (Collegium S. Bonaventura, 1882-1902) IX.585-90.

<sup>2</sup> Quaracchi IX.589.

The Franciscan audience of 1262 would have, as is clear from the passage, been well-aware of the story of Francis's vision of the Seraph and his stigmata. Yet Bonaventure appears to be offering a new gloss on a familiar story. The sermon's text is Matthew 24:30: "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven." In the moral sense, Bonaventure explains, the verse refers to stigmata that Francis received; he is the "heavens" upon which the sign of the Son of man appears. The text of the homily is thus in a sense Francis's wounded flesh, and in Bonaventure's sermon those marks gesture towards an eschatological and cosmic horizon.<sup>3</sup> The sermon takes the form of an extended comparison of Francis with the celestial sphere--its beauty is reflected in Francis's purity, its orderly movement is modeled in Francis's obedience, its universal expanse is measured in Francis's limitless love, and its mysteries are intimated in Francis's ecstatic contemplation. The passage cited above speaks to the scope of Francis's vast love. In this context the appearance of the Seraph is not out of place--the heavens are not a void dotted with spinning orbs but a dynamic hierarchy of angelic presences. The figure of the Seraph indicates that Francis's love was as expansive as the heavens and as ardent, even self-immolating, as the fiery creatures who flank God's throne.

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<sup>3</sup> On the eschatological interpretation of Francis's wounds in this sermon see Zachary Hayes, "The Theological Image of St. Francis in the Sermons of St. Bonaventure," in *Bonaventuriana: Miscellanea in onore di Jacques Guy Bougerol, ofm* (Rome: Edizioni Anoniamum, 1988), 1:333-34. On the eschatological significance of St. Francis for Bonaventure in general, see Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 31-38. On the metaphor of Francis as book, see Richard Emmerson and Ronald Herzmann, *The Apocalyptic Imagination in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 52-53, 70-72.

If the celestial body of Francis suggests cosmic splendor, the image of a softened heart evokes a more intimate devotion. The juxtaposition of the two is characteristic of Bonaventure's style, but there is nothing unusual or innovative in Bonaventure's choice of images. Images of melting and imprinting are found in a number of twelfth- and thirteenth-century devotional texts.<sup>4</sup> And the appearance of the Seraph in Francis's wounding vision was well established in the legends of Francis's life by the time Bonaventure wrote his official biography. The connection of the Seraph with "burning love" can be found in the writings of John Scotus Eriugena, Gregory the Great, and Bernard of Clairvaux, to name only some of the most important examples in a long and varied interpretive tradition.

But the passage is more than the sum of its sources. Particularly striking is how the image plays between interior and exterior, heart and flesh, spiritual fervor and elemental heat. Because Francis was inflamed with love, his heart was supple enough to receive the imprinting of the sign of Christ. Bonaventure's sermon moves fluidly between an object lesson drawn from the qualities of iron, hagiography of Francis, and direct moral appeal. The symbolic transfer of molten iron to a loving heart occurs through Francis's physical body, which, due to the fiery love in his heart, was able to be imprinted

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bernard of Clairvaux's influential comparison of the soul's union with God to molten iron which takes the form of fire, *De diligendo Deo* 28: "quomodo ferrum ignitum et candens igni simillimum fit, pristina propria que exutum forma..." *Bernardi opera*, vol. 3, ed. J. Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, and H. M. Rochais (Rome: Editiones Cisterciensis, 1957-58), 143. Gertrude the Great uses this same image in her *Legatus memorialis abundantiae Divinae pietatis*, I.4. And in the same work she describes a vision of her soul melting like wax to take the imprint of Christ (*Legatus* II.7). Cf. Bernard McGinn, "Love, Knowledge, and Mystical Union in Western Christianity: Twelfth to Sixteenth Centuries," *Church History* 56.1 (Mar. 1987), 8-9.



visibly with the marks of the cross. And in turn Francis's imprinted body bears witness to a heart, melted by love, whose receptivity to divine wounding made the physical imprinting possible. The entire spectacle serves as a powerful homiletic *exemplum* aimed at cultivating in Bonaventure's audience a more fervent affective devotion to Christ through Francis.

What is witnessed here, in a brief sketch, is the way in which affectivity plays at the boundary of body and spirit. To understand how and why affect should cut across this distinction means interrogating the association of love with fire--a comparison so conventional that even by the thirteenth century it could almost be said to constitute a dead metaphor--if it had been for medieval theologians a metaphor of any kind. I will not be the first to suggest that it was not a metaphor at all, and will moreover risk overliteralizing the association to ask, simply, what did it mean for medieval Christians to say that love *burns*? In the language of thirteenth-century Parisian theology, what does it mean to describe the movement of the soul by means of the movement of the most subtle corporeal substance? To explore some of the many answers to this question, I will trace this cluster of affective images across the multiple genres of writing that constitute the early and middle parts of Bonaventure's theological career. The association of love with fire played a precise and wide-ranging role in Bonaventure's understanding of the soul's motive power--its capacity to love and be united with God, especially as that capacity

was demonstrated in an exemplary way through the spiritual ascent and death of St. Francis.<sup>5</sup>

In drawing out this association, Bonaventure develops a theory of the soul and its capacity for transformation in union with God that gives specificity to the Christian desire for self-abandonment in God and the annihilation of the soul in union with God. Though Bonaventure does not use the language of the soul coming to nothing, he describes a state of ecstasy or *excessus mentis* that is possible in this life, but which constitutes the death and transformation of the soul in union with God. In this ecstatic state, the boundaries between the soul and God--between active and passive, mover and moved--are effectively consumed in the fire of union.

## 2. *The Appearance of the Seraph to Francis*

Nowhere are the theological possibilities of the notion of “burning love” illustrated so vividly as in the image of the Seraph, the six-winged angelic creatures flanking God’s throne in Isaiah 6 whose name in Hebrew means “burning.” Though Bonaventure--who earned the name of *Doctor Seraphicus* of the church--does more to exploit the image of the Seraph as a model of devotion than anyone before him, he was

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<sup>5</sup> Francis was not only an icon of ecstatic love for Bonaventure, but also a theologian whose own writings were deeply influential on later Franciscan thinkers. On Francis’s contributions to the theology of ecstatic union and its cosmic dimensions, see Alessandro Vettori, *Poets of Divine Love: Franciscan Mystical Poetry of the Thirteenth Century* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), esp. 40-78.

not the first to do so.<sup>6</sup> Jacques de Vitry's *vita* of the early Beguine Marie D'Oignies recounts that the holy woman, hating the wretchedness of her flesh, cut out a piece of her body. "She had been so inflamed by an overwhelming fire of love that she had risen above the pain of her wound and, in this ecstasy of mind, she had seen one of the seraphim standing close by her."<sup>7</sup> Almost twenty years before Francis's death, this episode from the life of Marie D'Oignies associates ecstasy, wounds, burning love, and a vision of the Seraph. While there is no firm evidence of influence on the Franciscan tradition, this episode clearly anticipates not only the later legend of Francis's wounding, but also Bonaventure's interpretation of it in terms of the branding "fire of love."<sup>8</sup>

The association of the Seraph with Francis's stigmata has a long history in the legends of Francis's life. It has traditionally been held that Francis's vision was attested as early as the announcement of his death. However, as this source cannot be reliably dated to the year of Francis's death in 1226, Wayne Hellmann has argued convincingly that Thomas of Celano's *Vita Prima*, completed in 1229, provides the earliest known

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<sup>6</sup> Here I am interested primarily in the Seraph as an image of fire, love, and hierarchy, though these significations are not the only functions of the Seraph image. For example, Ewert Cousins examines the six-winged Seraph image as a meditative image or mandala representing an "organized totality. See Cousins, "Mandala Symbolism in the Theology of Bonaventure," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 40 (1971), 185-201.

<sup>7</sup> Jacques de Vitry, *The Life of Marie D'Oignies* 1.22, trans. Margot H. King (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 1993), 54.

<sup>8</sup> On the possible evidence of direct influence see Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 86, 236n3; King, 8.

mention of the Seraph's appearance in Franciscan legend.<sup>9</sup> Unlike later versions of the story, however, Thomas's does not make the Seraph the agent of Francis's wounds, and, in fact, the figure is not really a Seraph, but a man with six wings "like a Seraph." In a later passage Thomas returns to the six-winged figure of the Seraph, this time as a model of Franciscan piety: "We too can certainly win the same reward [that Francis won], if we extend two wings over our heads, as the Seraph did; that is to say, by having a pure intention and conducting ourselves uprightly." The middle wings, outstretched, are the "twofold duty of charity" to one's neighbor"--refreshing his soul with the word of God and of relieving his bodily needs with material assistance." And the lower wings cover the body, "destitute of merits," with "innocence by contrition and confession." In all of this, Thomas writes, the Seraphic model is Francis, who "bore the image and likeness of the Seraph, and as he persevered on the cross, he merited to fly away to the sublime order of the spirits."

Thomas's six-winged allegory draws on the similar schemes of Alan of Lille and Richard of St. Victor, who take the Cherubim as the allegorical figure of a six-winged spiritual itinerary. Thomas's transposition of the allegory onto the Seraph has little significance insofar as the image functioned simply as a mnemonic or organizing device for a six-fold spiritual lesson. But by introducing the Seraphim, Thomas introduced into the story of Francis's vision a very different set of associations which Thomas's *vita* left unexplored. Thomas thus set the stage for an interpretation of St. Francis as a new Isaiah

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<sup>9</sup> Wayne Hellmann, "The Seraph in Thomas of Celano's *Vita Prima*," in *That Others May Know and Love: Essays in Honor of Zachary Hayes, OFM*, ed. Michael F. Cusato and F. Edward Coughlin (Franciscan Studies 34) (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1997), 23-41.

and as mystical hierarch, based on the biblical image of the Seraph and its development in medieval interpretations of the theology of the sixth-century Syrian ascetic known to medieval readers as Dionysius the Areopagite.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. *The Dionysian Hierarchy*

While the writings of Dionysius were not entirely unknown to Latin theologians in the early middle ages, they were not available in Latin until the ninth century, when the abbot Hilduin translated the corpus given by the Byzantine emperor to Louis the Pious in 827. In the translation and commentary of the ninth-century theologian, John Scotus Eriugena, and again in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century schools through the translation of the Victorine John Sarrazen, the Dionysian corpus exercised a profound influence on medieval Christian thought. Drawing deeply on the language of scripture and the fifth-century Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus, Dionysius describes the ascent of the mind to God and the drawing of all things into God by the means of a hierarchy of ecclesial and celestial ranks. Of particularly wide influence was Dionysius's conception of a ninefold

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<sup>10</sup> Hellmann contends that Thomas would have been aware of the Dionysian and monastic theological associations of the Seraph image from his education at Monte Cassino. Whatever Thomas's education had or had not exposed him to, what is evident is that Thomas's discussion of the Seraph does not at any point in his *Vita* exploit the association of the Seraph with fire. Moreover, Thomas's Seraph-like figure is not depicted as performing the same purifying function of the biblical seraph. Its significance is limited to its cruciform posture, its six wings outlining the virtues, and its flight symbolizing Francis's ascent to Christ. Hellmann discusses some of the differences in the Seraph imagery in Thomas and Bonaventure's accounts in his essay, "The Seraph in Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure: The Victorine Transition," in *Bonaventuriana I*, ed. Chevero Blanco (Rome: Edizioni Antonianum, 1988). On the development of the legend of the Seraph in Francis's vision, see Chiara Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate: Una storia per parole e immagini fino a Bonaventura e Giotto* (Turin: Einaudi, 1993); cited in McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 61.

angelic hierarchy by which all things are purified, illumined, and perfected so that all things come to resemble God as closely as possible.

By the thirteenth century, many readers would find in the Latin translations of Dionysius's writings a program of ascent through contemplation that culminated in a loving intimacy with God that penetrates deeper than knowledge. Such a conception is not to be found explicitly in the Dionysian corpus. But the traditional association of the Seraphim, who occupy the most intimate position to God in the Dionysian celestial hierarchy, with love or affection, provided the exegetical hinge by which the soul's ascent to a state beyond knowing could be seen to culminate in a union with God characterized by the sharing of love between God and the soul.

In Dionysius's own writings, however, the Seraph is never associated specifically with love. In the *Celestial Hierarchy*, Dionysius gives the etymology of Seraphim as "carriers of warmth" (*thermainontēs*) and explains that the name signifies "a perennial circling around the divine things, penetrating warmth, the overflowing heat of a movement which never falters and never fails, a capacity to stamp their own image on subordinates by arousing and uplifting in them too a like flame, the same warmth. It means also the power to purify by means of the lightning flash and the flame. It means the ability to hold unveiled and undiminished both the light they have and the illumination they give out. It means the capacity to push aside and to do away with every

obscuring shadow.”<sup>11</sup> For Dionysius, the fire that characterizes the Seraphim is the dynamism of hierarchy: burning, it purifies, flashing, it illuminates, and heating, it unites and perfects. All three of these Seraphic operations are ordered toward the goal of every hierarchy: “to enable beings to be as like as possible to God and to be at one with him.”<sup>12</sup> The Seraphim, who with the Cherubim and the Thrones enjoy the closest likeness and proximity to God, conform and unite beings to God in the manner of a purifying and elevating fire.

Though all orders of angels purify, illumine, and perfect, and in this way unite all beings to God, Dionysius suggests that the characteristics of Seraphic fire are in some ways exemplary of the hierarchic operations as a whole. The properties of fire, at least, provide a fitting solution to the exegetical problem presented by the biblical appearance of the Seraph in Isaiah 6:6. In this passage the Seraph is depicted as touching the prophet’s lips with a live coal plucked from the burning altar. It was on the basis of this passage that the Seraph was understood to purify, and the live coal helped to cement the association of the Seraph’s purifying activity with fire. But at the same time, the scene seems to violate the hierarchic order, insofar as the highest order of intermediaries, rather than one of the lower ranks of angels, appears to a human being. The author considers a number of credible solutions to the problem. It is possible, he writes, that by Seraphim

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<sup>11</sup> *Celestial Hierarchy (CH)* 205B-C, trans. Colm Lubheid, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 162. The critical edition is by Beate Regina Suchla, Günter Heil, and Adolf Martin Ritter, *Corpus Dionysiacum*, 2 vols. (*Patristische Texte und Studien* bd. 33 and 36) (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1990-91).

<sup>12</sup> *CH* 165A (Lubheid, 154).

the scriptures mean only to signify the purifying operation by means of fire, and that the angel who visited the prophet was in fact of a lower order. Then he considers another, more profound explanation. In this case, the qualities of Seraphic fire are taken to explain the nature of the entire celestial hierarchy. In this explanation, what a hierarchy *is* is a series of reflections and transmissions of the light and warmth of the highest order, just as “the rays of the sun pass easily through the front line of matter since it is more translucent than all the others.” But the subsequent layers of matter are more opaque and thus transmit less and less of the sun’s light. “Similarly, the heat of fire passes more easily into those entities which are good conductors, more receptive and in fact quite like it.”<sup>13</sup>

This is not a simile, but an instance of the “harmonious law that operates throughout nature” which reigns in the celestial hierarchy just as it does in the material realm. What every intermediary mediates is in fact the light and warmth of God.<sup>14</sup> Since this is most fully reflected and absorbed in the highest order of the Seraphim, its manifestation in the lower orders of the hierarchy is identified most fully with those beings of the highest ranks. In an extraordinary uplifting in contemplation, then, Isaiah was able to see, in a manner of speaking, the highest orders of angels through the transparency of the hierarchy and the immediate presence of God throughout the

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<sup>13</sup> CH 301B (Lubheid, 177).

<sup>14</sup> The term “mediate” is misleading to the extent it implies hierarchical ranks standing “between” God and the lower orders. Hierarchy does not separate one level from another, it is on the contrary the reason all things are united to and filled with God. For a thorough and precise analysis of this dynamic, see Eric D. Perl, *Theophany: The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007), 65-81. Perl’s phrase for this aspect of Dionysian thought, “immediate mediation,” captures the necessity and the difficulty of the term “mediate” to describe the activity of hierarchy.



hierarchy. This is because of the self-diffusive nature of the light and warmth of God. It is also because of the uplifting power of fire by which the Seraphim make all things godlike by an “endless, marvelous upward thrust toward God,” which is signified by the beating of the intermediate wings of the Seraphim. Yet for Dionysius the prophet’s uplifting is intellectual: “the sacred theologian was uplifted to a conceptual knowledge [*noētēn*] of the things seen.”<sup>15</sup>

#### 4. The “Affective Turn” in Thirteenth-Century Mystical Theology

As Paul Rorem has shown, the increasing emphasis on the role of affectivity in Dionysian union among a number of thirteenth and fourteenth century theologians was not the result of a single interpretive decision.<sup>16</sup> The association of the Seraphim not only with fire but with the fire of love appears in Christian literature throughout late ancient and early medieval Christian writings. John Scotus Eriugena’s commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy explains that the Seraphim’s motion is warm because it is inflamed

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<sup>15</sup> CH 305A (Lubheid, 179). John Sarrazen’s Latin translation reads, “Ad intelligibilem visorum sursumagebatur cognitionem.” Sarrazen’s and other Latin translations edited in P. Chevallier, ed., *Dionysiaca: Recueil donnant l’ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys de l’Aréopage*, 2 vols. (Bruges 1937–1950), I.966.

<sup>16</sup> Rorem, “The Early Latin Dionysius: Eriugena and Hugh of St. Victor,” in *Re-thinking Dionysius the Areopagite*, ed. Sarah Coakley and Charles M. Stang (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 71-84. In fact the association of Seraphim with a sublime circular movement resonates with ancient descriptions of the circular movement of heavenly bodies. And more specifically, Gregory of Nyssa in his *Songs* commentary interprets the “immovable movement” of the Seraphim with *epektasis*. See Maurice de Gandillac’s notes to *La hiérarchie céleste, Sources Chrétiennes* 58 (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 1958), 107n1.

with charity.<sup>17</sup> Following him, Hugh of St. Victor, in his commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, associates the preeminence of the Seraphim with the excellence of love over knowledge. But even earlier, and most likely in a different textual tradition,<sup>18</sup> Gregory the Great's homily 34 on Luke 15 includes a discussion of the angelic ranks that exercised great influence in later medieval angelology. There Gregory gives an extended reflection on the fiery and desirous nature of the Seraphim.<sup>19</sup> However, he does not impute love to the Seraphim to the exclusion of the other orders. The distinction of Seraphim and Cherubim

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<sup>17</sup> *Expositiones in Ierarchiam Coelestem*, ed. J. Barbet, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* (CCCM) 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975). The relevant passages of Eriugena's commentary include Cap V, ln 139-40 ("angeli sunt Seraphim, quia feruore caritatis calefiantur a superioribus et se inferiores calefiant"); VII.26-29 ("Et quidem, inquit, qui sciunt hebraicarum uocum proprias significationes, sanctum nomen Seraphim aut incedentes, aut calefacientes manifestare; hic subauditur dicunt; est enim EKLEIPSIC uerbi"); VII.90-145 (on the warm motion of the Seraphim); VII.164-211 (on the relation of the Seraphic warmth to love, e.g. ll. 170-73: ("Ipsa etiam ignea celestis Seraphim uirtus incircumelata et inextinguibilis, incircumelata uidelicet, quia totam se inferioribus reuelat, inextinguibilis uero, quoniam semper in ea diuinus ardet amor"); et al. Chapter XIII treats Dionysius's discussion of the Seraph who visited Isaiah.

<sup>18</sup> Though Gregory mentions Dionysius the Areopagite by name in this homily, his knowledge of the *Celestial Hierarchy* and thus his direct debt to Dionysius for his angelic hierarchy is disputable. Joan Petersen argues, for example, given the discrepancies in Gregory and Dionysius's list of angelic ranks, that Gregory may have derived the rank either directly from the relevant biblical passages, or from earlier Latin authors. See Petersen, "'Homo omnino Latinus?' The Theological and Cultural Background of Pope Gregory the Great," *Speculum* 62.3 (1987), 529-51.

<sup>19</sup> "And there are some who are enkindled with the fire of heavenly contemplation, and they burn with desire for their creator alone. They want nothing from this world, but are fed only with love for eternity. Abandoning every earthly thing, they transcend all temporal things with their minds. Loving and burning, and resting in their ardor, they burn with love. They inflame others by speaking, and those whom they touch with their words immediately begin to burn with love for God. What can I call them but Seraphim, whose hearts, which have been turned into fire, shine and burn?" *Homiliae in euangelia* 34.7, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (CCSL) 141, ed. R. Etiax (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 311.

is not based on the distinction of love and knowledge (a distinction, after all, that Gregory took pains to complicate), but of different modes of love. Citing Romans 13:10 that “love is the fullness of the law, he says of the Cherubim--which he notes means “fullness of knowledge” (*plenitudo scientiae*)--that they are “full of love [*dilectione*] for God and their neighbor.”<sup>20</sup> This passage would seem to be the source for Bernard’s discussion of the angels in his nineteenth sermon on the Song of Songs. Concerning the Seraphim, Bernard writes:

God, who is love, has so drawn and absorbed them into himself, and so seized for himself their ardor of holy affection, that they seem to be one spirit with God, just as, when fire inflames the air and imprints all of its own heat, the air assumes the color of the fire so that it appears not just to be ignited, but to be fire itself. The Cherubim love especially to contemplate God's knowledge which is without limit, but the Seraphim love the charity that never passes away. Hence they derive their names from that in which they are seen to be preminent: “Cherubim” denotes the fullness of knowledge, but those called “Seraphim” are burning or enkindled.<sup>21</sup>

The association of the Seraphim with ardent love echoes Gregory’s homily, and Bernard’s list of the nine angelic ranks is identical to the one Gregory supplies. Yet with Bernard’s homily the distinction between the Seraphim and the Cherubim begins to harden along the axis of love and knowledge. Of the Cherubim Bernard mentions only their self-sufficiency in gazing on the wisdom and knowledge of Christ. Where the Cherubim look upon God with knowledge, the Seraphim adhere to God as one spirit in love.

Even so, it would be easy to overstate the distinction Bernard makes here between knowledge and love, as the lesson of the sermon is that the righteous love of the angels of every rank is grounded in knowledge. He glosses the “young maidens” (*adulescentulae*)

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<sup>20</sup> *Hom. in euan.* 34.10.

<sup>21</sup> *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* (*Bernardi opera*, vols. 1-2), I.111.

of 1:2 as the human beings who are filled with love for God because they have just begun to receive God's "outpouring" or infusion of love. By contrast, the nine angelic orders love God according to their modes of understanding and according to their more perfect knowledge of him. Far from a hymn to Seraphic love beyond knowing, Bernard's sermon draws a reproachful contrast between well-ordered angelic love based on knowledge and the misguided zeal of outpoured love which causes new recruits to religious life, the *adulescentulae*, to err in intemperate self-sacrifice. Bernard's description of the Seraphic "ardor of affection" was put in the service of cooling the fires of ecstatic love in his listeners.

It is a witness to the complexity and the fluidity of the medieval Christian concept of *affectus* that Bernard's use of Seraphic imagery to condemn intemperate fervor among spiritual beginners became an *auctoritas* for a description of loving union with God from which knowledge was excluded. Given the confluence of sources in which the Seraphim were interpreted as ardent love,<sup>22</sup> it would have been difficult for any thirteenth-century theologian to read Dionysius's description of hierarchy without making this association. Hugh of St. Victor's commentary circulated alongside the translations of the Dionysian corpus available to Parisian theologians in the thirteenth century. But perhaps even more influential was Thomas Gallus's paraphrase of the Dionysian corpus, the *Extractio*.

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<sup>22</sup> Among which are included, as well, Isaac of Stella's *Epistola de anima*, in which the seraphim are connected with hope, which he writes is the desire for and love of God. Through its appearance in the Pseudo-Augustinian *De spiritu et anima*, this passage was familiar to Parisian theologians in the thirteenth century as well. Hugh of St. Victor, in addition to his *Celestial Hierarchy* commentary, associates the seraphim with love in *The Mystical Ark*. And William of St. Thierry's *De Natura et dignitate amoris*, which will be discussed in Chapter 2, uses the image of the Seraphim to describe those who are surrounded with such *affectus* that they ignite one another in the love of God.

Gallus is the first to gloss the Dionysian state of unknowing as one of love when he writes, in his commentary on the *Mystical Theology*, that Moses was united to God in *dilectionis*.<sup>23</sup> In the second half of the thirteenth century, Gallus's *Extractio*, too, circulated as part of the Dionysian corpus, and was read as a translation alongside those of Hilduin, Eriugena, and John Sarrazen.<sup>24</sup>

By glossing Dionysius's state of unknowing as one of affective union, Gallus was attempting not to deprecate the intellect, but to work out what *must* be true of the soul if it is to be capable of being united to God. In his later and longer *Explanatio* on the Dionysian corpus, Gallus brings further specificity to the ascent towards God by describing the capacity in the human soul for affective union, what he calls the *principalis affectio*, or the "spark of synderesis (*scintilla synderesis*) which alone is able

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<sup>23</sup> Boyd Taylor Coolman, "The Medieval Affective Dionysian Tradition," in Sarah Coakley and Stang, 91.

<sup>24</sup> On the Dionysian corpus in thirteenth-century Paris, see H. F. Dondaine, *Le Corpus Dionysien de l'Université de Paris au XIIIe Siècle* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1953), and Csaba Németh, "The Victorines and the Areopagite," in *L'école de Saint-Victor de Paris*, ed. Dominique Poirel (Bibliotheca Victorina 22) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 334. As for the translations available to Bonaventure, Dondaine cites evidence from *De scientia Christi* and *De mysterio Trinitatis* that Bonaventure had access at least to the translations of Hilduin, Sarrazen, and Eriugena (Dondaine, 114n121). For a study of another thirteenth century ms, see D. E. Luscombe, "Venezia, Bibl. Naz. Marziana, Latini Classe II, 26 (2473) and the Dionysian Corpus of the University of Paris in the Thirteenth Century," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 52 (1985), 224-27.

to be united to the divine spirit.”<sup>25</sup> Bonaventure is even more explicit in identifying synderesis with the affective part of the soul and as the motive principle toward the good, both in his university writings on the divisions of the soul and in his treatises on the soul’s ascent. Thomas Gallus was not the only source for Bonaventure’s conception--the term synderesis has a complex history in scholastic debates about the soul and its capacity for acting in accordance with the natural law.<sup>26</sup> But the Victorine’s affective and unitive understanding of synderesis in relation to Dionysian unknowing provided a hinge connecting Bonaventure’s understanding of the affective part of the soul with the affective bond that unites soul and God in ecstasy.

### 5. *Laws of Attraction*

Though deeply indebted to Thomas Gallus’s glosses on the Dionysian corpus, Bonaventure does not simply reproduce Gallus’s logic in explaining the dynamics of the soul’s ascent. As Boyd Coolman argues, it would be wrong to say that Gallus deprecates

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<sup>25</sup> *Explanatio MT I*, CCM 223, ed. Declan Lawell (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 4. See Lawell, “Affective Excess: Ontology and Knowledge in the Thought of Thomas Gallus,” *Dionysius* 26 (Dec. 2008), 139-74 at 147. As Lawell explains, however, Thomas distinguishes synderesis as a *vis animae* from the *scintilla* which is not a power of the soul but something that is produced in the contact of synderesis with the divine Other and which does not properly belong to the soul. Cf. Lawell, “*Ne de ineffabili penitus taceamus*: Aspects of the Specialized Vocabulary of the Writings of Thomas Gallus,” *Viator* 40.1 (2009), 151-84, esp. 154-57.

<sup>26</sup> I discuss these debates and Bonaventure’s contribution to them in Chapter 1.

the role of intellect in the ascent to God.<sup>27</sup> He does nevertheless privilege love over intellect in his account of union with God, for an essential reason--that is, the superessentiality of God. The union effected between the soul and God, as the source of *esse*, is beyond *esse*, and so the faculty that apprehends *esse*, the intellect, has no place in it.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, for Bernard, the Seraphim's preeminence can be explained by the continuity between the love which is God's essence and the Seraphim's burning desire. Yet for Bonaventure, the affective nature of union with God is not a consequence of love's superiority, nor is it that God's being is revealed more in love than in intellect. Bonaventure's characterization of the soul's movement toward and union with God rests on a claim about the nature of love, or better, evinces a set of assumptions about what love is and how it works. Desire (*desiderium*), Bonaventure explains, can be activated even in the absence of certain knowledge.<sup>29</sup> It is not a consequence or response to knowledge but a receptive capacity for spiritual movement, cohesion, and transformation. Thus when it is a question of *union*, affect serves better than intellect as an explanatory mechanism for the relationship between God and the soul. As Coolman writes, reflection

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<sup>27</sup> Coolman argues that a reading of Gallus's *Songs* commentaries alongside his Dionysian glosses suggests that the theologian understood the relationship between intellect and affect to be mutually informing, and corrects the overly "linear" conception of ascent from intellect to union that a reading of the Dionysius commentaries alone may suggest. See Coolman, 96. The differences between Gallus and, for instance, the *Cloud* on this point are clear--intellect is not a "problem" for Gallus--it simply does not play a role in the soul's most intimate union with God. Lawell, too, warns against reading Gallus as positing an "antipathetic dichotomy between the two faculties" of love and intellect ("Affective Excess," 151).

<sup>28</sup> See Lawell, "Affective Excess," 156. This is grounded in the text of the *Mystical Theology*: "strive upwards as much as you can towards union with him who is beyond all being and knowledge," *Mystical Theology* (MT) 997B (Lubheid, 135).

<sup>29</sup> *Commentarius in Ecclesiasten* (*Comm. in Eccl.*) 7 (Quaracchi IV.54).

on the role of *affectus* in the interpretation of Dionysian ascent “is not merely an interpolation of love into *The Mystical Theology*, but also a conviction regarding how human beings are most basically constituted and how they relate most fundamentally to God.”<sup>30</sup>

With these convictions about the constitution of human beings in relation to God came assumptions about how creation as a whole was ordered by and to its Creator. For Bonaventure, the constitution of affectivity by which all things revert to their source is more basic than the distinction between humans and nonhumans, animate and inanimate beings. Concomitant with the analogical structure of the universe, a structure that is more fundamental than the distinction between the bodily and the spiritual, is a similarly continuous understanding of affect--a single principle of movement that orders the physical world and governs the soul’s wayfaring through the sensible and intelligible worlds and its journey into God.<sup>31</sup>

At the culmination of that journey into God, as Bonaventure describes it in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, the relationship between the intellect and affect most clearly emerges as a problem. After an extended quotation of the first chapter of Dionysius’s *Mystical Theology*, Bonaventure describes the soul’s *transitus* (“passing over,” and also,

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<sup>30</sup> Coolman, 86.

<sup>31</sup> As Denys Turner writes with regard to Thomas Gallus: “In the last resort the true point of Gallus’ dependence on neo-platonic *eros* is there, where Bernard’s or Denys the Carthusian’s is to be found: in their enthusiastic espousal of a general world-view in which erotic love, or love modeled on the erotic, is the prime mover, the moved, and the end of all motion, whether in the orders of nature, of the human, or of grace,” *Eros and Allegory: Medieval Exegesis on the Song of Songs* (Cistercian Studies 156) (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1995), 73.



literally, “death”) and *excessus mentis* (ecstasy or exceeding of the soul) into God: “For this passing over to be complete, all intellectual operations must be abandoned, and the height of the affect (*apex affectus*) must be completely carried over and transformed into God. This is mystical and very secret; no one knows (*novit*) it but the one who receives it, and no one receives it but the one who desires (*desiderat*) it, and no one desires it unless they are inflamed to the marrow with the fire of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>32</sup>

This is one of the richest and most perplexing passages in Bonaventure’s writings, and it has inspired much debate about the nature of Bonaventure’s mystical theology. What does the *transitus* described here reveal about how Bonaventure understood the relation of love and knowledge in the union of the soul with God? Does the abandonment of intellectual operations mean that all knowledge is excluded? On the one hand, Bonaventure makes some kind of claim for union as a state of knowing when he states, in the language of Revelation, that “no one knows [*novit*]” this mystery “except one who receives it.” But on the other hand, the *excessus mentis* is described in terms of darkness,

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<sup>32</sup> *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* 7.4. Latin text of the *Itinerarium* from the Quaracchi Edition, published with notes by Philotheus Boehner and English translation by Zachary Hayes, *Works of St. Bonaventure* II (Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002), 36. Translations provided are my own unless otherwise noted. Cf. the similar statement in the *Breviloquium* 5.6 (Quaracchi V.260), in which Bonaventure characterizes the *excessus* as “learned ignorance” and paradoxically identifies darkness as a form of illumination: “Quo quidem desiderio ferventissimo ad modum ignis spiritus noster non solum efficitur agilis ad ascensum, verum etiam quadam ignorantia docta supra se ipsum rapitur in caliginem et excessum, ut non solum cum sponsa dicat: In odorem unguentorum tuorum curremus, verum etiam cum Propheta psallat: Et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis. Quam nocturnam et deliciosam illuminationem nemo novit nisi qui probat, nemo autem probat nisi per gratiam divinitus datam, nemini datur, nisi ei qui se exercet ad illam.”

not illumination, and, most emphatically, as the death of the soul. What kind of knowledge could take place here?

Modern commentators on Bonaventure have disagreed on the extent to which *ecstasis* is entirely free of knowledge. Implicit in these discussions are assumptions about what the love which characterizes ecstatic union *is* in the soul, and why it is privileged in the *excessus mentis*. Etienne Gilson insists that the abandonment of knowledge is the essential point of Bonaventure's mysticism, affirming that the soul cannot fully grasp or see God in this life. But where the intellect cannot by its very nature go, he writes, the faculty of love pursues further, to touch and know God experientially.<sup>33</sup> In doing so, the intellect is not so much abandoned as drawn up into and concentrated in the faculty of love, since for Bonaventure the faculties are ultimately identical to the soul itself in substance. Thus the *mens* is exceeded in a way that includes the intellect within the faculty of affect. To say that intellect is abandoned simply means that the soul has no representation of God but enjoys immediate contact with its object. George Tavard, by contrast, rightly argues that ecstasy exceeds *all* faculties of the soul, because it occurs beyond the distinction of the faculties, in the undifferentiated substance of the soul. Thus, he concludes, ecstasy may be considered either in terms of love or knowledge. Nevertheless, he concludes, love is the more appropriate term since *synderesis* is affective.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan and Frank J. Sheed (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1938), 458-64.

<sup>34</sup> *Transiency and Permanence: The Nature of Theology According to St. Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1954), 244-45.

Joseph Ratzinger is less equivocal, suggesting that in Bonaventure's vision ecstatic union with God totally is free of knowledge. This view was conditioned, he writes, not only by his Dionysian influences but also by a "Franciscan view which attributed a higher value to the *affectus* rather than to the *intellectus*."<sup>35</sup> Yet, since Bonaventure not only received but helped to create the "Franciscan view," Ratzinger's explanation would seem only to defer the question of what Bonaventure means by the abandonment of intellectual operations in ecstasy. And even if one wished to speak of a more or less unified "Franciscan view," the characterization of this view as valuing *affectus* over *intellectus* is far too simple. Affective and intellectual operations are crucial for the formation and spiritual progress of the believer. The question here is precisely what role affect plays *in excessus mentis*. Is it possible to give a positive characterization of this state as something other than a deeper form of knowing, or something analogous to it?

For Bonaventure, I suggest, affect is not simply the other of intellect, or a modification or deepened form of knowledge. Rather, affect is privileged at the highest point of encounter possible in this life, not because it is more powerful, or superior to knowledge, or more like God than intellect, but because the nature of affection is to cleave and unite--affection is movement and touch, and the *affectus* names the capacity for that movement and contact in the soul. This is evident in the movements of physical objects and it is no less literally true for spiritual beings. Natural motion is not a convenient metaphor for ascent; it is a divinely implanted means of return to God. When

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<sup>35</sup> *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 90.

Bonaventure writes that at the highest stage, all intellectual operations are abandoned and the height of the affect is carried over into God, he is most fully working out the implications of a theology of union.

Bonaventure's statements about the abandonment of intellectual operations in ecstatic union, however variously they have been interpreted, have secured his inclusion in what historians have classed as the "affective tradition" of medieval Dionysian scholarship. We should be cautious, however, about drawing too heavy a line around the so-called "affective Dionysian" tradition, or, less charitably, the "affective misreading" of Dionysius. For one thing, the meaning of terms like *affectus*, *amor*, and *dilectio* could mean very different things for the various authors who were interpolating them into the Dionysian texts. And more to the point, reflection on the role of love in the *reditus* of the soul is not alien to the Dionysian corpus itself. Like other authors who reflected on the role of love in spiritual ascent, Bonaventure's development of the concept of *affectus* itself is deeply embedded in the "Dionysian universe," and draws, implicitly and explicitly, on the conception of *eros* as "a capacity to effect a unity" that Dionysius describes in the *Divine Names*.<sup>36</sup> In Denys Turner's formulation, *eros* is the key to Dionysius's ecstatic metaphysics: God's ecstasy of *eros* creates the cosmos and through ecstatic *eros* all creation returns to God.

For Dionysius, *eros* is the affirmation that all things are in God, for "all things must desire, must yearn for, must love, the Beautiful and the Good."<sup>37</sup> And in this way

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<sup>36</sup> Hilduin translates *eros* as *cupiditas*. But Bonaventure favors the translation of *eros* as *amor* found in both Eriugena and John Sarrazen's translations.

<sup>37</sup> See Turner's lucid discussion of Dionysian *eros* in *Eros and Allegory*, 47-70.

the Beautiful and the Good are the source of all movement, both the movement of the soul and the movement in the “realm of what is perceived.” *Eros* “binds the things of the same order in a mutually regarding union. It moves the superior to provide for the subordinate, and it stirs the subordinate in a return toward the superior.”<sup>38</sup> In other words, *eros* orders the cosmos to God and holds it together in hierarchy. And since it is hierarchy through which all things flow from God and return and are united with God, *eros* is ecstatic union. “The divine *eros* brings ecstasy so that the lover belongs not to self but to the beloved.”<sup>39</sup> This conception of *eros*--God’s providence for creation, the movement of creation towards its end, and the dispossession of the soul in God--resonates with Bonaventure’s understanding of the place of *affectus* in the soul and in the role of *desiderium* in the consummation of creation in God. As I will discuss in Chapter 2, Bonaventure cites the *Divine Names* on this very point: “We call love the unitive force.”<sup>40</sup> And he places *amor* at the heart of Dionysius’s theology in his *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*: “For, as Dionysius says, the whole of mystical theology, ‘what is hidden

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<sup>38</sup> *Divine Names* (DN) 709D (Lubheid, 81).

<sup>39</sup> DN 712A (Lubheid, 82). Sarrazen’s translation reads: “Est autem faciens exstasim divinus amor, non dimittens sui ipsorum esse amatores, sed amatorum” (Chevallier, I. 215)

<sup>40</sup> “Amorem dicimus vim unitivam,” *Commentarius in Secundum Librum Sententiarum* (2 *Sent.*), d. 39, dub 1 (Quarrachi II.916). This is a paraphrase of DN 713A-B (Lubheid, 83), in which Dionysius credits his teacher Hierotheus with this definition of *eros*: “When we speak of yearning [*ton erōta*], whether this be in God or an angel, in the mind [*noeron*] or in the spirit [*psychikon*] or in nature [*physikon*], we should think of a unifying [*enōtikēn*] and co-mingling [*synkratikēn*] power [*dynamis*]...” Sarrazen’s translation of this passage reads, “Amorem sive divinum sive angelicum sive intellectualem sive animalem sive naturalem dicamus, unitivam quamdam et concretivam intelligemus virtutem...” (Chevallier I.225-26). See Chapter 2 for further discussion of Bonaventure’s interpretation of this passage.

in mystery', consists in excessive love according to a threefold hierarchic force: purgative, illuminative, and perfective.<sup>41</sup> What Bonaventure derives from Dionysius's corpus--and not only from the identification of the Seraph with charity--is that love means a modality of union, which is the end of the soul in its relation to her Beloved, and the end of all things in relation to their creative source.

Thus, I suggest, the abandonment of intellectual operations that Bonaventure describes in the final stage of the *itinerarium* is not a simple passage from knowledge to love. In the first place, the force of *amor* is present throughout the journey as that by which each stage exceeds itself, and by which the soul is drawn into and out of itself. In addition, to describe the mystical *transitus* as a passage from knowledge to love is to miss what is for Bonaventure a more fundamental transformation--to put it in the simplest terms which I will complicate in later chapters, it is a transformation from *moving* to *being moved*. This distinction is more fundamental than the distinction between love and knowledge--or rather, it is on the basis of the distinction between moving and being moved that Bonaventure's use of the terms for love and knowledge must be understood. In the seventh of his *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ*, Bonaventure argues that Christ's (human) soul had a comprehensive knowledge of the finite created things which were in the Exemplar. But the infinity of things expressed in the Exemplar could not be comprehended by any finite soul. Therefore, Bonaventure concludes, Christ knew the infinity of the expressive exemplar not with a comprehensive knowledge, but by an "excessive" or "ecstatic" knowledge, which rather than grasping things completely, is

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<sup>41</sup> *Commentarius in Evangelium Lucae* 13.46 (Quaracchi VII.349).

instead “taken captive [*capitur*] by them.” Bonaventure explains, “I call this an ecstatic mode of knowing, not because the knower exceeds what it knows, but because the knower is drawn toward an object that exceeds it in an ecstatic way that raises the soul above itself.”<sup>42</sup> This kind of knowing, Bonaventure notes, is what Dionysius describes in the *Mystical Theology* as a “union exceeding the nature of the intellect.” This capacity for knowledge was perfect in Christ, but it is also possible for all souls, both *in via* and in heaven, depending on the measure of grace they receive.

Bonaventure distinguishes the two modes of knowledge in a number of ways. For one thing, “in the comprehensive mode, the knower takes captive what it knows, but in the ecstatic mode what is known takes the knower captive.” Second, comprehensive knowledge “terminates in the gaze (*aspectus*) of the intelligence, while ecstatic knowledge finds its goal in an appetite of the intelligence.”<sup>43</sup> When the mind knows something finite, it takes in the object and conforms it to itself. But when the soul knows the infinite, it is the soul which is drawn up and transformed into the object. As Bonaventure explains, the fulfillment of this type of knowledge is not vision, but desire. Though classed here as a mode of knowledge, this transformation, which Bonaventure

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<sup>42</sup> “Excessivum autem modum cognoscendi dico, non quo cognoscens excedat cognitum, sed quo cognoscens fertur in obiectum excedens excessivo quodam modo, erigendo se supra se ipsum,” *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi*, q. 7, concl. (Quaracchi VII.40). In his *Sentences* commentary, Bonaventure makes similar distinctions within knowledge. 3 *Sent.* d. 24, dub. 4 (Quaracchi III.531): “God is known through vestiges, through images, through the effects of grace, and through intimate union of God and the soul [*animae*], just as the Apostle says, ‘Whoever adheres to God is one spirit with him’. And this is the most excellent knowledge [*cognitio*], which Dionysius teaches. This knowledge consists in ecstatic love and is above the knowledge of faith [*elevat supra cognitionem fidei*] according to its common state.”

<sup>43</sup> *De scientia Christi*, q. 7, concl. (Quaracchi VII.40).

says “totally deifies” the soul, is described just as the mystical *excessus mentis* of the *Itinerarium*. Whether or not it goes by the name of knowledge, the movement of ecstasy is a movement and transformation of the soul into God. Ecstatic knowledge is nothing the soul does, but something that happens to the soul. And the language for this kind of movement is the language of affectivity, not cognition. Ecstatic knowing is realized in *appetitus*, not *aspectus*.

This passage suggests that the transformation that occurs in the soul’s exceeding of itself is fundamentally one of the soul’s motion. To know God ecstatically means to be drawn out of oneself and into God. Another name for the soul’s motion toward its object is *amor*. Thus one could say that to love God is to know God in an ecstatic way, or conversely, that to know God ecstatically is love. The crucial distinction is that union with God is a state in which the soul is seized, taken captive, and transformed into its object. This is why ordinary knowledge, in which the soul takes hold of its object, can have no place in the soul’s intimacy with God according to Bonaventure. In this way, *amor* names an even closer intimacy with God than *sapientia*, which Bonaventure characterizes as a movement of a thing towards the soul.<sup>44</sup> Love, by a contrary motion, carries the soul towards the thing it loves. Love is here still defined in opposition to knowledge, but in Bonaventure’s distinction *amor* is not simply a more perfect or deeper

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<sup>44</sup> 1 *Sent.* d. 32, a. 2, q. 1, ad.1, 2, 3. (Quaracchi I.562): “Certain acts refer to a motion from a thing to the soul, such as wisdom, while others refer to the motion from the soul to the thing, such as loving [*amare*].” In his much later *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Bonaventure discusses ecstasy as a *sapientia nulliformis*, but this passage from the *Sentences* indicates that *sapientia* is not necessarily an ecstatic movement, any more than *cognitio* is.



*cognitio*. Love and knowledge are two different forms of movement and contact between the soul and its object.

### 7. *Plan of the Dissertation*

My contention, then, is that the *transitus* of the soul out of itself and into God should be understood less as a modification of knowledge than a modification of the soul's very movement. Setting up the question this way, it is possible to examine the range of what *affectus* means for Christian spirituality in itself, and not simply as the other or opposite of intellect. I will analyze aspects of Bonaventure's conception of the affective part of the soul, and the affective ordering of the cosmos, and the ways in which these related conceptions of affect are determined by and bear upon his understanding of the ascent of the soul in union with and ecstasy in God.

I begin in Chapter 1 with Bonaventure's understanding of synderesis, which he understands as an infallible affective inclination to the good. In his elaboration of this concept, the irreducibility of affect and its complex relation to the intellectual aspects of the soul comes most sharply into view. I suggest that in his discussion of synderesis and its relation to the cognitive habit of *conscientia*, Bonaventure is working through the difficulties in positing that the most intimate state of union is affective--for the *affectus* must have in it some capacity to seek and cleave to God that is free from the possibility of cognitive error. Though Bonaventure does not resolve the difficulty, his description of synderesis as a weight inclining the soul to natural motion shifts the register in which affective union is conceived.

Chapter 2 explores the elaboration of *amor* as a “uniting force” in Bonaventure’s theology. The dynamic of love as a cosmic force likened to the motion of fire is not only drawn from the Dionysian tradition, but also resonates with the Aristotelian view of the cosmos and elemental motion, as well as the Augustinian imagery of love as a weight by which the soul seeks to rest in God. I explore here how the ambiguities in the Aristotelian understanding of affective motion structure Bonaventure’s unitive and eschatological vision of *amor* and *caritas* which he develops in parts of his *Sentences* commentary and in his later *Breviloquium*.

The remainder of the dissertation turns to Bonaventure’s writings on the spiritual journey of the soul to the *excessus mentis* and the character of ecstatic love which unites the soul to God. First, Chapter 3 takes up the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, examining the ways in which the entire structure leads to the final death in which the *apex affectus* is transformed and carried over into God. The abandonment of intellect, I suggest, is less a matter of progressing beyond a state of knowledge than it is a matter of dying to the soul’s activity, which entails the abandonment of will, properly speaking.

In Chapter 4, I look more closely at how Bonaventure understands the relation of the will and the affective part of the soul to which the will belongs. I examine how the tensions of will and affectivity as a natural capacity to be moved play out in the exemplary life and death of Francis of Assisi. As an example of ecstatic love, Francis himself, through the presentation of his compassion in the *Legenda Major*, becomes a medium and agent of affective motion in the reader.

In a brief conclusion I consider some of the implications of Bonaventure's conception of affect for the historiography of medieval "affective" devotion. The language of affect was for Bonaventure, above all, a language of force--of attraction, compulsion, and resistance. In ways that can never fully be reduced to knowledge, those forces are at play as well in the texts of medieval Christian theology, and in scholarly efforts to describe them.

## Chapter 1: The Soul's Innate Tendency to the Good

In a 1991 address to the bishops' workshop at the National Catholic Bioethics Center, Cardinal Ratzinger sought to recover the conception of *synderesis* from its modern oblivion. In that address he critiques the notion of conscience which he argued had become pervasive in twentieth-century Catholic moral theology, one which “dispenses with truth”<sup>1</sup> and spurns ecclesial authority by reducing conscience to “subjective certitude.”<sup>2</sup> In place of the socratic trust in human beings' capacity for truth, this notion of conscience supports a sophistic worldview “in which man alone sets the standards for himself.”<sup>3</sup> A rehabilitation of this crucial ethical concept requires not only a recognition that conscience must be formed in order to function properly, but a renewal of the medieval scholastic distinction of two levels of conscience. The Latin term *conscientia*, Ratzinger explains, is only half of the story. *Conscientia* refers to judgment or decision; as Thomas Aquinas defines it, conscience is a concrete act of the intellect.<sup>4</sup> But the second level, Ratzinger argues, which the medieval scholastics called *synderesis* or *synteresis*, has been forgotten, and demands not a simple recovery but a new articulation, since the obscurity of the original concept was responsible for its forgetting. In the Middle Ages, the word *synderesis* “remained unclear in its exact meaning, and for

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<sup>1</sup> The address, along with an 1984 address on morality and ecclesial authority, is reprinted in Joseph Ratzinger, *On Conscience: Two Essays* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ratzinger, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Ratzinger, 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Summa Theologiae* I.79.13, in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, doctoris angelici Opera Omnia iussu Leonis XIII, O.M. edita, cura et studio fratrum praedicatorum* (Rome: 1882-1996).

this reason became a hindrance to a careful development of this essential aspect of the whole question of conscience.”<sup>5</sup> Thus instead of *synderesis*, Ratzinger employs “the much more clearly defined Platonic concept of *anamnesis*. It is not only linguistically clearer and philosophically deeper and purer, but *anamnesis* above all also harmonizes with key motifs of biblical thought and the anthropology derived from it.”<sup>6</sup>

Ratzinger is no doubt aware that the concept of *anamnesis* was in fact anything but unproblematic in late ancient and medieval Christian thought. Socrates elaborates the concept of *anamnesis*, or recollection, most fully in the *Meno*: all learning is actually a recollection of truths known in the soul’s preexistence in its previous incarnations. The body is a state of forgetting, and learning is the overcoming of that embodied state of forgetfulness.<sup>7</sup> Bonaventure, in his discussion of conscience which will be examined in detail in this chapter, summarily dismisses the Platonic concept of *anamnesis*, which he notes has been refuted and condemned by both Aristotle and Augustine.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ratzinger, 30.

<sup>6</sup> Ratzinger, 31.

<sup>7</sup> *Meno* 85e-86c, trans. W. C. K. Guthrie, in *The Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 370-71.

<sup>8</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.902). Cf. *ibid.*, d. 18, a. 2, q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.450): “animae nostrae a sua prima origine sunt ignorantes nec noverunt ista quae per sensus addiscunt; non enim *addiscere* est *reminisci*, ut probant Sancti et philosophi.” Though Augustine condemns the Platonic idea of *anamnesis* (cf. *De Trinitate* XII.24), he offers his own solution to *Meno*’s paradox in his early dialogue *De Magistro*. The paradox as Augustine states it is this: all knowledge is taught through signs, but if one already knows the meaning of a sign one is taught, then no learning takes place. But one understands the meaning of a sign only if he already knows the thing that the sign signifies. Thus no knowledge can actually be imparted through signs. *De magistro*’s solution to this paradox, in short, is that the soul does not have a memory of universal truths, but it does have an interior light or teacher by which it judges those truths.

In spite of the complicated Christian history of *anamnesis*, the term gives Ratzinger a way to discuss a universal “Christian memory” by which all people recognize the natural law. But with the term *anamnesis* Ratzinger skirts one of the most problematic aspects of the Christian concept of synderesis: the extent to which it constitutes knowledge. Ratzinger calls *anamnesis* “an inner ontological tendency within man...toward the divine,” and “an inner sense.” It should not be understood as “a conceptually articulated knowing, a store of retrievable contents.” It is at the same time the love of God which is “naturally implanted in us beforehand.” Concerned to counter a notion of conscience which would make the subject infallible, Ratzinger’s *anamnesis* is not an oracle of truth or an incontestable will which might contest ecclesial authority. It is rather a capacity to recognize Truth and Goodness when presented with them. As such *anamnesis* grounds papal authority as the authority of calling Christian memory back to itself. “All power that the papacy has is power of conscience.”<sup>9</sup> And because this ontological tendency is found in every human being naturally, it grounds papal authority as universal. In other words, *anamnesis* is what makes *all* people accountable to papal authority.

Though replacing the term synderesis, Ratzinger’s notion of *anamnesis* inherits not only many of the same scriptural and patristic authorities found in medieval discussions of synderesis, but many of the tensions and ambiguities as well. *Anamnesis* is not a “conceptually articulated knowing,” but it is a “primordial knowledge” and a universal knowledge on the basis of which conscience makes judgments. And at the same

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<sup>9</sup> Ratzinger, 36.

time, it is also identified as love of God and the tendency toward God. Ratzinger thus draws up into a single concept two strands of thinking on synderesis, one which understands it as a cognitive faculty, and another which identifies it with the *affectus*. By identifying synderesis with *anamnesis*, and thus with an inner light for recognizing universal truths, Ratzinger collapses love into knowledge, will into reason, affect into intellect--the capacities that Bonaventure took pains to distinguish in his elaboration of synderesis.

### *1. The Medieval Emergence of Synderesis*

A consideration of the development of and diversity in medieval conceptions of synderesis helps to frame the distinctiveness of Bonaventure's conception of synderesis as an affective tendency towards the Good. While various ancient authorities referred to some kind of naturally implanted capacity for the good, the most frequently discussed questions concerning the concept synderesis--as well as the term itself--were derived from an enigmatic and tantalizing passage from Jerome's commentary on Ezekiel.<sup>10</sup> After glossing the four animals of Ezekiel's vision as the four evangelists--an allegorical gloss that dates at least to Irenaeus and which was accepted as a commonplace in medieval

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<sup>10</sup> The most extended treatment of the development of the concept of synderesis is D. Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et morale au xii<sup>e</sup> et xiii<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Tome II: Problèmes de morale, part 1 (Louvain: 1948), 101-349. Lottin edits many of the relevant texts and provides a clear analysis. For a brief summary, with emphasis on the spiritual and unitive sense of the term, see Aimé Solignac, "Syndérèse," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité: ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire (DS)*, vol. 14.2, ed. Marcel Viller, et al. (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1932-1995), 1407-1412.

biblical exegesis--Jerome presents another gloss on the four animals, as powers or divisions of the human soul:

Some, following Plato, hold that the rational, and the irascible, and concupiscible parts of the soul, which Plato calls *logikon*, *thumikon*, and *epithumetikon*, are signified by the man, the lion, and the ox. And they place reason and cogitation and the mind and the virtue of counsel and wisdom in the summit of the brain (*in cerebri arce*). And they place fierceness (*feritatem*) and wrath (*iracundium*) and violence, which are in the gall, in the lion. And then they place libido, luxuria, and all cupidity of pleasures in the liver, that is in the ox, who cleaves to the works of the earth.<sup>11</sup>

Douglas Kries points out that, in enumerating these three parts of the soul, Jerome appears to be following the provisional tripartite division of the soul which Socrates relates in book four of the *Republic*.<sup>12</sup> But the relation of the fourfold pattern of Ezekiel's vision to the tripartite anthropology of the *Republic* is not self-evident. Making sense of this numerical discrepancy requires positing some other, fourth, part of the soul, and this is where the difficulty for medieval readers lies:

And they posit a fourth which is above these and outside of these three, which the Greeks call *syneidesis*--the spark of conscience (*scintilla conscientiae*), which, even in the sinner Cain, after he was thrown out of paradise, was not

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<sup>11</sup> "Plerique, iuxta Platonem, rationale animae et irascentium et concupiscentium, quod ille *logikon* et *thumikon* et *epithumetikon* vocat, ad hominem et leonem ac uitulum referunt: rationem et cogitationem et mentem et consilium eandem uirtutem atque sapientiam in cerebri arce ponentes, feritatem uero et iracundiam atque uiolentiam in leone, quae consistit in felle, porro libidinem, luxuriam et omnium uoluptatum cupidinem in iecore, id est in uitulo, qui terrae operibus haereat," *Commentarii In Ezechielem*, ed. F. Glorie, CCSL 12 (Turnhout, 1964), 11.

<sup>12</sup> Douglas Kries, "Origen, Plato, and Conscience (*Synderesis*) in Jerome's Ezekiel Commentary," *Traditio* 57 (2002), 67-83 at 69. Kries argues convincingly that Jerome's reference to followers of Plato who posit the fourth part of the soul as *syneidesis* refers directly to Origen. In his commentary on Romans Origen identified *syneidesis* mentioned in 2 Corinthians 1:12 with the *pneuma* of 1 Corinthians 2:11 and Romans 8:16. All of these Pauline passages would reappear as *auctoritates* in medieval discussions of *synderesis*.



extinguished, and by which we feel ourselves to sin (*nos peccare sentimus*), when conquered by pleasures and furor while deceived by a likeness of reason. And they properly consider it to be the eagle, since it is not mixed up with the three but corrects the other three when they err. And meanwhile, we read in scriptures that it is called the spirit which “intercedes for us with ineffable groans.” For no one knows (*scit*) what is in human beings except the spirit within him, which Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, implored them to preserve together with body and soul. And yet, following what is written in Proverbs (“The wicked one esteems it lightly when he goes to the depths of sin”), we can see that it falls in the wicked and loses its place, since they have no embarrassment or shame in their delights, and they deserve to hear: “Your face has become that of a prostitute, for you do not even know that you should blush.”<sup>13</sup>

Even on the face of it, the passage presents several interpretive problems concerning the meaning of the term *syneidesis*. First, is it a power distinct from the other three, and if it is above reason and not deceived by reason, is it rational? And why, if it is inextinguishable, do human beings persist in sin? How, in any case, can it be inextinguishable and at the same time be said to lose its place so that the sinner feels no shame? All of these questions framed medieval debates about the concept, but they were exponentially complicated by the obscurity of the term itself. The modern edition, following the evidence from the earliest manuscripts, renders the term in question as *syneidesis*, a term which appears in 2 Corinthians 1:12, as well as the writings of early

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<sup>13</sup> “...quartumque ponunt quae super haec et extra haec tria est, quam Graeci uocant *syneidesin*--quae scintilla conscientiae in Cain quoque pectore, postquam eiectus est de paradiso, non extinguitur, et, uicti uoluptatibus uel furore, ipsaque interdum rationis decepti similitudine, nos peccare sentimus--, quam proprie aquilae deputant, non se miscentem tribus sed tria errantia corrigentem, quam in scripturis interdum uocari legimus spiritum, qui *interpellat pro nobis gemitibus ineffabilibus*. *Nemo enim scit ea quae hominis sunt, nisi spiritus qui in eo est*, quem et Paulus ad Thessalonicenses scribens cum anima et corpore seruari integrum deprecatur. Et tamen hanc quoque ipsam conscientiam, iuxta illud quod in Pouerviis scriptum est: *Impius cum uenerit in profundum peccatorum, contemnit*, cernimus praecipitari apud quosdam et suum locum amittere, qui ne pudorem quidem et uerecundiam habent in delictis et merentur audire: *Facies meretricis facta est tibi, nescis erubescere*,” *Commentarii In Ezechielem*, 12.

Greek Christian theologians (in Latin writings the term is translated as *conscientia*.)<sup>14</sup> In medieval manuscripts of Jerome's commentary, however, the term appeared as *synderesis* or *synteresis*. This mistranscription left medieval readers with an entirely unattested term which eventually came to be regarded as somehow distinct from *conscientia*.

Having no Latin equivalent, *synderesis* entered the vocabulary of the schools as a term of art and required explanation from the context of the passage, as well as any other authorities which could be adduced to illuminate the murky concept. The contingency of the textual error that gave rise to this locus of theological reflection led Jacques de Blic to characterize the notion of *synderesis* as a "happy accident" which helped bring greater precision to the notion of *conscientia*.<sup>15</sup> But if the appearance of the term *synderesis* was fortuitous, the significance that the concept took on in the Middle Ages was surely

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<sup>14</sup> In addition to Kries, see Michael B. Crowe, "The Term *Synderesis* and the Scholastics," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 23 (1956), 151-64; 228-45.

<sup>15</sup> See de Blic, "Syndérèse ou conscience?" *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 25 (1949), 146-57. Though the theory that *synderesis* was a mistranscription of *syneidesis* is the most widely accepted, there have been other theories for the term's appearance in Jerome's commentary. H. Siebeck argued that the term *synteresis* derives from *tereo* and signifies a principle of conservation or maintenance. See Siebeck, "Noch einmal die Synderesis," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 10 (1897), 520-529. Also see Oscar Brown, *Natural Rectitude and Divine Law in Aquinas* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981), 175-77; Jean Rohmer, "Syndérèse," in *Dictionnaire Théologie Catholique*, vol. 14.2 (Paris, 1941), 2992-96; M. W. F. Stone, "Moral Psychology before 1277" in Thomas Pink and M. W. F. Stone, eds., *The Will and Human Action: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (London: Routledge, 2003), 118n40. Stone argues that the mistranscription of *syneidesis* "does not explain why Jerome should consider it necessary to draw attention to such a common scriptural term," and suggests that the connotation of preservation is intentional." Gerard Verbeke argues even more strongly that the medieval concept of *synderesis* is fundamentally related to the Stoic conception of *oikeiosis*, a term which Verbeke writes "refers to the basic impulse of a being, especially of man, toward himself, toward his own nature and condition, toward what is suitable and connatural for him, in a word, toward whatever is appropriate for him," *The Presence of Stoicism in Medieval Thought* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 55.

overdetermined. Mistranscriptions occurred constantly in the transmission of medieval texts. If this particular error provided a entirely new locus of theological speculation, it is perhaps in part because it proved useful for drawing together a set of disparate ideas from scriptural and patristic authorities on some natural capacity for goodness in human beings, as well as statements about an innate knowledge of the law. Romans 2:15 refers to the law written on the hearts of the Gentiles, and Romans 7:15 suggests that some desire for the good exists in human beings in spite of their inability to choose it. These passages, alongside early Christian glosses of them, would become important *auctoritates* for explaining the concepts of synderesis and the consequent concept *conscientia*.

In the earliest discussions of Jerome's gloss, the patristic authority cited most often to explain synderesis or the *scintilla conscientiae* was Augustine's *De Trinitate*, in which he distinguishes a higher and lower activity of reason and identifies the first as the contemplation of eternal things.<sup>16</sup> The idea of a "spark" of superior reason is at least as old as Anselm of Laon and appears in early commentaries on Gratian's *Decretum* as the capacity for the natural law.<sup>17</sup> The first known mention of synderesis appears also in this connection, in a very early and anonymous commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*, attributed to a Magister Udo. Jerome's text is cited there as an *auctoritas* in support of the argument that reason does not consent to mortal sin: "The eagle signifies *sinderesim*, that

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<sup>16</sup> Augustine refers to the higher part of reason or the *ratio sublimior* through *De Trinitate* XII. For a helpful discussion of the sources and subsequent development of this concept, see R. W. Mulligan, "Ratio Superior and Ratio Inferior: The Historical Background," *The New Scholasticism*, 29 (1955), 1-32.

<sup>17</sup> Lottin, 106.

is the superior reason which even in Cain was not extinguished, which is never mixed up in the other three, but always corrects them when they err.”<sup>18</sup>

While this commentator ultimately rejects the implication that superior reason does not sin, the equation of synderesis with *ratio superior* had enduring appeal into the thirteenth century, as witnessed in the writing of the Parisian Dominican Roland of Cremona. Jerome, Roland argues, called synderesis the “face of the eagle” because its function is to *see*, that is to discern, which is the work of the intellect.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, however, alternative theories were put forward. Discussions progressed rapidly enough that the English scholar Alexander Nequam, writing on *liberum arbitrium* in his *Speculum speculationum*, paused to consider a wide diversity of opinions on synderesis. On some points he found widespread agreement: “It is customary for almost everyone to say that synderesis is extinguished in no one *in via*, even in Cain.”<sup>20</sup> But the major point of disagreement concerned the nature of synderesis: “Some say that synderesis is a natural affect by which the mind always desires the good and tends to that good whose

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<sup>18</sup> “Aquila uero significat sinderesim (*Vienne 1050*: sinendesim) id est superiorem rationem que etiam «in Cain extincta non est, nunquam se miscentem tribus, sed ipsa semper errantia corrigentem».” Text from Lottin, 107. His text is drawn from two manuscripts, Vat. Palat. lat. 328, and Vienne 1050. The first reads “sinderesim,” the second “sindendesim.” For further background on the text, see Lottin, “Le premier Commentaire connu des Sentences de Pierre Lombard,” in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 11 (1939), 64-71.

<sup>19</sup> From Roland of Cremona’s *Questiones magistri Rolandi super quattuor libros Sententiarum* (Paris Maz. 795), ed. Lottin, 130-134.

<sup>20</sup> “Dici ergo solet fere ab omnibus quia scinderesis in nullo uiatore extinguitur, nec eciam in Cain,” ed. Rodney M. Thomson (*Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi XI*) (Oxford University Press, 1988), 404.

image it carries in itself.”<sup>21</sup> On this view, because the mind bears the image of God, it naturally seeks that of which it is the image. Synderesis, then, is the *imago Dei*, or an affective property of the *imago*. Alexander contrasts this view with the explanation that synderesis is the superior part of reason by which even the most wicked of human beings are able to “revert to themselves.” But he notes that there is some equivocation as to whether synderesis refers to superior reason itself, or to its *scintilla*, that is, the spark of natural goodness which persists in reason through sin.

Gradually in the thirteenth century the specific nature of synderesis came under more scrutiny, and the debate shifted to what, exactly, synderesis was in the soul--a distinct power, or a habit or tendency of a power? In the most extensive consideration of the topic up to that time, Philip, the chancellor of Notre Dame in Paris from 1217 until his death in 1236, named synderesis a *potentia habitualis*, a power perfected by a habit, that is to say, a capacity of the soul which is naturally informed by a disposition for a particular end. As such, he writes, “its effect is both upon apprehension and on desire, but more properly on desire.”<sup>22</sup> More significantly, Philip is also among the first to distinguish *conscientia* as a distinct phenomenon from synderesis. In earlier treatises, when *conscientia* was mentioned at all, it was used more or less interchangeably with synderesis. With Philip the two concepts become distinct, even if only partially: Philip

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<sup>21</sup> “Dicunt quidam scinderesim esse naturalem affectum quo mens semper appetit bonum, et ad illud bonum tendit cuius in se ymaginem gerit,” Thompson, 405.

<sup>22</sup> The standard edition of Philip’s *Summa* is *Philippi Cancellari Parisiensis Summa de bono*, 2 vols., ed. Nikolaus Wicki. *Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevi* (Bernae: Francke, 1985).

defines conscience as the conjunction of synderesis and free choice. When conscience errs, the error comes not from synderesis but from free choice.<sup>23</sup>

In the *Summa* of Bonaventure's teacher and predecessor Alexander of Hales, synderesis is defined with Philip's formula of a natural *potentia habitualis*.<sup>24</sup> Alexander attributes synderesis to reason insofar as it is cognitive, natural rather than deliberative, and practical rather than speculative. But for Alexander, cognitive and motive powers are not so distinguished that synderesis cannot also be called motive.<sup>25</sup> Conscience, similarly, belongs both to the cognitive and the motive aspects of the soul, and is situated, as it were, below synderesis but above reason.<sup>26</sup> But it is also possible to distinguish within conscience a higher part, which, Alexander argues, is identical to synderesis.<sup>27</sup>

Alexander's influence on Bonaventure can be felt in the concern with which Alexander considers the relation of the cognitive and motive parts of the soul which are expressed in

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Aquinas treats synderesis and conscience as distinct as well. He expresses their relationship as one of habit to act, both belonging to the practical intellect (*STh* I. 79.12-13). Aquinas discusses many of the traditional questions about synderesis at greater length in his sixteenth question *De veritate*, but the basic definition is the same. For a comparison of Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas's conceptions of synderesis, see Eduard Lutz, *Die Psychologie Bonaventuras, in Beitrage zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* VI, 4-5 (Munster, 1909), 180-90).

<sup>24</sup> *Summa Theologica* II.73.1.1 (Quaracchi: Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1924), 417. Alexander died before completing his *Summa Theologica*. What is known as his *Summa*, or the *Summa Fratris Alexandri*, was compiled in its completed form by Alexander's students, including Bonaventure. See V. Doucet, "The History of the Problem of the Authenticity of the Summa," *Franciscan Studies* 7 (1947), 26-42, 274-312.

<sup>25</sup> *Summa* II.73.1.2 (Quaracchi II.418).

<sup>26</sup> *Summa* II.73.2.3 (Quaracchi II.423).

<sup>27</sup> *Summa* II.73.2.6 (Quaracchi II.426).

the habitual power of synderesis, but his formulation is still less determinative than Bonaventure's own.

Another Franciscan at Paris, Odo of Rigaud, seems to have had the most direct influence on Bonaventure's understanding of synderesis. Odo claims, as Bonaventure will, that synderesis belongs to the motive part of the soul, whereas conscience belongs to the cognitive. And he argues that synderesis belongs to the will insofar as it is natural. The affinities between Odo's and Bonaventure's accounts, however, bring their differences into relief. Odo, like Philip, considers conscience to be the conjunction of synderesis and free choice, a formula that is nowhere in Bonaventure's account.<sup>28</sup> And Odo's analogy for the relation of conscience to synderesis, that synderesis is the light which enables the vision of conscience, functions to express the dependent relation of conscience to synderesis without attributing the errors of the former to the latter.

Bonaventure, too, is concerned to keep synderesis free from the errors of conscience, but unlike Odo, his favored image for synderesis does not express dependence. The natural light which illumines the practical intellect is internal to conscience and counterposed to synderesis as an affective "heat" and "weight." Bonaventure, then, diverges from his scholastic predecessors most sharply when it comes to the relations between *conscientia* and synderesis. Why would Bonaventure want to dissociate the two, and to distinguish, more definitively than any of his predecessors, between the cognitive and motive operations of the soul? As I will suggest, Bonaventure's dissociation of *conscientia* and synderesis can be seen as an attempt to

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<sup>28</sup> Lottin II.1, 199n1.

bring further precision to the nature and operation of *affectus*, and of the natural motion of which synderesis is the principle. These concepts will become central to Bonaventure's distinctive approach to spiritual and moral pedagogy and to the soul's ascent to God.

In the early years of the thirteenth century, a very different conception of synderesis was elaborated by the illustrious Victorine scholar and Dionysian commentator Thomas Gallus (d. 1246). As noted by Declan Lawell, who has examined Gallus's use of the term in painstaking detail, the term synderesis appeared in Gallus's writing as early as his 1218 Commentary on Isaiah.<sup>29</sup> There Gallus describes synderesis as a *vis animae* above both the sensitive appetites and above *ratio*. The power of synderesis reaches out for God's grace, which Gallus describes as a "fiery river" which flows into the *affectus* rather than the *intellectus*. And in one of his final works, an extended commentary on the Dionysian corpus, Gallus describes the *principalis affectio* of the mind, which, he writes, "exceeds the intellect no less than the intellect exceeds reason, or reason exceeds the imagination." And this *affectio* is "the spark of synderesis which alone is capable of union with the divine spirit."<sup>30</sup> Gallus's treatment of synderesis ignores many of the questions raised by Jerome's commentary that other masters discussed, but his association of synderesis with the soul's union with God and his placing of synderesis above *ratio* resonate in Bonaventure's discussion of the term, both in the *Itinerarium* and in his discussion of synderesis and *conscientia* in the *Sentences* commentary. Thus in the case of Bonaventure, I disagree with Lawell's caution that

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<sup>29</sup> Latin text of Gallus's commentary ed. G Th  ry, "Commentaire sur Isa   de Thomas de Saint-Victor," *La vie spirituelle* 47 (1936), 146–62.

<sup>30</sup> *Explanatio MT I* (Lawell, 4).



Thomas Gallus's unitive sense of synderesis must be "distinguished from the use it acquired in ethics to designate a kind of perception of moral truths or an inclination towards moral goodness."<sup>31</sup> For Bonaventure, synderesis as the capacity of the soul to be carried into union with God and synderesis as the infallible inclination towards goodness are one, and thus the latter sense, as I will argue, cannot be understood except with reference to the former.

## 2. Orientation

Though the thirteenth-century genre of *Sentences* commentaries and the form of the disputed question facilitate side-by-side comparison of different theologians' treatment of synderesis, it is important to remember that even a standard university exercise like glossing the *Sentences* afforded considerable latitude for individual glossators. To understand the importance of synderesis for Bonaventure we have to understand how he conceives the overall subject and purpose of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* and the place of synderesis within it. Here, as in many of Bonaventure's later works, his prologues--both to the work as a whole and to each volume individually--provide a crucial orientation to the plan and purpose of the work. Bonaventure explains the subject of the second book of Peter's *Sentences* as the original rectitude of human beings and their deviation from that rectitude. And the book's end or final cause is the return to and attainment of the Good. As I will argue, Bonaventure finds in synderesis the locus of human beings' natural rectitude which persists in sin and through whose direction and movement the soul finds

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<sup>31</sup> Lawell, "Specialized Vocabulary," 153.

its way back to the Good. Thus for Bonaventure synderesis concerns the ultimate end of Peter's work and occupies a central place in the moral (re)formation of wayfaring human beings.

This becomes clear also in Bonaventure's prooemium to the whole of the *Sentences*. This first prooemium takes the form of an *accessus ad auctorem*, an introduction to the text that describes the author, topic, and structure of the work to be commented upon. Since the early thirteenth century it was common to structure the *accessus* around the Aristotelian scheme of fourfold causality, in which the material cause refers to the topic to be treated, the efficient cause to the author, the formal cause to the structure or *divisio textus*, and the final cause to the end or purpose for which the author wrote. In the prooemium to the first book of his commentary on the *Sentences* (which serves as the prooemium to the whole work), Bonaventure finds the four causes of the work in a single sentence from the book of Job: "He has searched the depths of the rivers, and brought to light things that were hidden."<sup>32</sup>

His *accessus* to the *Sentences* proceeds as an exegesis of a scriptural passage and a description of what the work contains, so that this scripture itself, properly amplified, can be taken as a reader's guide to Lombard's text. In Bonaventure's exegesis, the river, spiritually understood, provides the key to the profundity, multidimensionality, and unity of Lombard's work. The elaborate textual structure, so characteristic of Bonaventure's later spiritual treatises and *collationes*, is already fully in evidence here. This structure, which Bonaventure finds hidden in a single word of scripture, constitutes an argument for

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<sup>32</sup> *Profunda fluviorum scrutatus est, et abscondita produxit in lucem.* Job 28:11

the beauty and coherence of a work that could be underestimated as an encyclopedic compendium of *auctoritates* compiled for the reference of scholars.

The efficient cause, which he considers last, provides a crucial clue to the exalted status of the work. In some ways, this is the most straightforward of the four causes. As the author of the work, Master Peter is the efficient cause. But the identity of the one who “searches the depths” is more ambiguous. According to 1 Corinthians, it is the Spirit who “searches all things, even the depths of God.” Thus, Bonaventure concludes, the efficient cause of the *Sentences* is in a sense both Peter and the Spirit, or Peter, with the help of the Spirit. This recalls Guerric of St. Quentin’s formulation, in his commentary on Isaiah, of the *duplex causa efficiens*, in which the Holy Spirit “moves Isaiah to write.”<sup>33</sup> Though Bonaventure does not use this phrase reserved for scriptural authority, his attribution of the work at least in part to the Holy Spirit recalls his *accessus* to the Gospel of Luke, in which he posits a threefold efficient cause: the Holy Spirit, the grace of the Holy Spirit, and Luke.<sup>34</sup> Even though the complex authorship of the *Sentences* is not as fully elaborated, still the attribution to both Peter and to the Holy Spirit suggests that for Bonaventure the *Sentences* is in some way inspired, over and above the sense in which all *auctoritas* ultimately derives from God. The dual attribution suggests that Bonaventure

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<sup>33</sup> On medieval *accessus* see A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), 9-72.

<sup>34</sup> *Comm. in Luc.* Pro.12 (Quaracchi VII.5).

considers his present work to be a commentary on an inspired text, or, to use his language, on the hidden things of the divine revealed with the help of the Holy Spirit.<sup>35</sup>

The remaining three causes of the work each have four aspects. The explanation of the material cause depends on the common properties of “rivers” understood physically and spiritually. What Bonaventure identifies as the four properties of physical rivers--namely duration, extension, motion, and effect--correspond to the fourfold material cause of the four volumes of Peter’s *Sentences*. The duration of this spiritual river is perennial, and thus the first book treats the persons of the Trinity, whose emanation is from all eternity. The river’s extension is the spaciousness of creation, the matter of the second book. Its motion is to circulate, that is, to join together the end and the beginning, the highest and the lowest, in the form of a circle, which is the movement of Incarnation, treated in the third book. And its effect is to cleanse, which is the work of the Sacraments, the topic of the fourth and final book.

The formal cause specifies what it is about the river that will be investigated. Here also Job supplies the answer: what is sought in the river is its depth in a fourfold sense, as treated in the four books of Peter’s work. The depth of the emanations is the height of divine being. The depth of creation is its vanity, which is considered in two aspects: the first treats of the procession (*egressus*) of all things, and the second part deals with the Fall, temptation, and original and actual sin. The depth of the Incarnation is its limitless

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<sup>35</sup> For discussion of Bonaventure’s understanding of the relation between *scriptura*, *revelatio*, and *theologia*, see Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 64-69. Ratzinger argues that Bonaventure’s later *Collationes in Hexaemeron* makes clear the understanding of revelation operative in the preface to the *Commentary*: the spiritual or hidden meaning of scripture, and not the letter of scripture itself, is properly called *revelatio*.

merit, and the depth of the sacraments is their efficacy, which is too great to be comprehended by the mind.

The final cause is the purpose of the work. Just as Job says that he searched the depths of the river for what was hidden, so in the *Sentences* the end consists in revealing hidden things (*abscondita*). Naturally, these are four in number: the hidden *magnitude* of the divine substance, the hidden *order* of the divine wisdom, the hidden *strength* of the divine power, and the hidden *sweetness* of the divine mercy. The description of the final cause thus makes clear that the discovery of God is the single end of the work in all of its four books.

Yet it is evident from the intricacy of his imagery that Bonaventure is not simply exhorting the reader--nor, alternatively, is he simply stating the topic of Peter's work. In this sense Bonaventure's preface performs the function of a table of contents, outlining the parts of the work and how they hold together. Approaching the work in light of the prooemium allows, and even demands the reader, at any point in the text, to locate himself or herself in the whole. Thus Bonaventure assumes the work is truly comprehensive, which is not the same as assuming it to be encyclopedic (in the modern sense of the term). The comprehensiveness is not that of a ready reference to be consulted for answers to all conceivable questions, but one which engulfs the reader and delineates his or her furthest horizons, both cosmic and historical. It is a work that, in Bonaventure's reading, refers human knowledge and desire to its final end, and situates it within the history of the development of Christian wisdom. The spatial arrangement of the work sketched in the prologue provides a kind of intelligible map for the soul's movement.

As an *accessus*, then, it provides not just a point of access into the work but an ongoing orientation within it. Even more, Bonaventure's prooemium does not just orient the reader to the text; it also announces that the study of the text is itself a matter of becoming oriented. This becomes especially clear in the preface to Book Two. Like the preface to the whole, this preface condenses the subject and end of the book into a single scriptural phrase. In the case of Book Two, the scripture is Ecclesiastes 7:30: "I have discovered only this, that God made human beings upright (*rectum*), and they confuse themselves through endless questioning." A condemnation of questioning is an ironic, or perhaps severe, way to introduce a book of over two hundred *quaestiones*, and serves as a quiet warning against overvaluing the academic exercise. If the latter mode of seeking knowledge is discouraged, then the first part of the passage provides another way into the text. Bonaventure focuses particularly on the word *rectus* (upright):

God not only made human beings *capable* of rectitude, by conferring his image upon them, but he also made human beings upright (*rectus*), by turning them toward himself (*ad se convertendo*). So human beings are upright when their intelligence is made to correspond to the highest truth in knowing (*cognoscendo*), when their will is conformed to the highest goodness in loving (*diligendo*), and when their virtue is joined to the highest power in acting (*operando*). And this happens when human beings are turned to God with their whole selves (*quando homo ad Deum convertitur ex se toto*).<sup>36</sup>

Human beings were created upright, and turned away from that rectitude in their intellect, will, and virtue. The word *rectitudo* recalls Anselm of Canterbury's use of the word as truth and justice in *De veritate*, but it can also signify straightness or an erect bodily

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<sup>36</sup> 2 *Sent.*, Pro. (Quaracchi II.4).

posture.<sup>37</sup> Both senses are evident in Bonaventure's use of the term here, so that the *rectitudo* in which human beings were created and from which they deviated is a matter of the formation and posture of human beings in relation to God, a basic orientation of the self to God from which human beings have turned aside. This, Bonaventure says, is the whole subject of book two, "which turns around (*circa versatur*) two things: the condition of human beings and their deviation."<sup>38</sup> If the prooemium to the whole provides the reader an orientation within the text, Bonaventure is also concerned with a second, more fundamental level of orientation which is closely connected with the first. The spatial and directional language of the second prooemium is pronounced, recalling that, with reference to the material cause of the work, we here find ourselves approaching the river of divine truth in its "spaciousness" (*spatiositatem*)--that is, the primary question this book will attempt to answer begins with *Where?* Where did human beings dwell by their original creation, and where--in their knowledge, their desires, and their actions--do they find themselves now in sin? For, in the plan of the *Sentences* as Bonaventure outlines it, it is precisely in Book Two in which human beings *find* themselves, both in relation to the work as a whole and in relation to the position of rectitude in which human beings were created. Specifically, the reader finds him- or herself *out of place*. To be out of place is not to be without place, without hope of finding one's way. The hope of finding the proper place is what animates the verse from Ecclesiastes, what Book Two turns around, and what all human understanding is ultimately directed toward:

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<sup>37</sup> *De veritate* 4, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Publishers, 1946), 173-99.

<sup>38</sup> 2 *Sent.*, Pro. (Quaracchi II.4).

Two things are contained in this verse: First, it explains that the upright formation (*recta formatio*) and rectitude of human beings is from God...and secondly that their wretched misalignment (*misera obliquatio*) is from themselves alone....And contained in these two things is the end of all human comprehension: that they may know (*cognoscat*) the origin of the good and, by knowing it, they may seek it and arrive at it and there find rest; and that they may know the origin and principle of evil, and shun and beware of it.<sup>39</sup>

This passage establishes an important (though implicit) link to the concept of synderesis, whose function is, both for Bonaventure and for other theologians, to seek the good and to shun or murmur against evil. This allusion suggests the importance of synderesis in the entire sweep of Book Two: As will become clear only later, in his commentary on Distinction 39 of Book Two, synderesis plays a crucial role in the soul's avoidance of evil and the attainment of, and dwelling in, the origin of goodness.

Synderesis, however, is not named in Bonaventure's prooemium, nor is the term found anywhere in Lombard's text. But even without the term Bonaventure makes a connection which elevates synderesis to a central position in Book Two. The scripture which serves as a kind of lintel inscription to the book, Ecclesiastes 7:30, appears in the second book of Lombard's *Sentences* in Distinction 39, precisely at the point at which Peter discusses the natural movement of the will. This is where Bonaventure will locate synderesis.

All of this suggests that, in order to understand what Bonaventure means by synderesis, it has to be seen as something other than one item in a sundry list of theological concepts. It must be seen in its proper and central place in the movement of human beings from original rectitude, to deviation through sin, and back to the origin of

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



goodness. Seen as such, synderesis stands as a key concept in his account of the soul's ascent to God.

### *3. Peter Lombard: How the natural gift of the will can be called evil*

The specific task of the present chapter is to understand Bonaventure's account of the place of synderesis in the soul and the nature of its movement toward the good. To that end we must turn to the text of Book Two, Distinction 39, which does not directly treat synderesis, but rather the extent to which the will, as naturally inhering in the soul, can be called a sin. The question arises from an apparent inconsistency in the way the authorities speak about the natural gifts of the soul--specifically, in the Augustinian triad of intellect, memory, and will. Intellect and memory, "however vitiated they may be...nevertheless do not cease to be goods because vice is not able to consume entirely the goodness in which God made them."<sup>40</sup> Yet the will of the wicked is itself called evil--does this mean that the will, unlike the intellect and memory, can cease to be a natural good by performing an evil act? How can a natural good ever be called evil without some contradiction? Peter considers several distinctions which attempt to obviate the contradiction. One may distinguish between will in its being (which is always good) and will in its disorder (as a privation of its being), between the natural power of willing and the specific actions of the will, and, finally, between the natural movement of the will to the good and the free movement of the will to sin. The first two distinctions provide a way of speaking about how the will can sin even though it is natural, but they do little to distinguish the

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<sup>40</sup> Peter Lombard, 2 *Sent.* 39.1. Trans. Giulio Silano, *The Sentences: Book 2: On Creation* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2008), 195.

particular sense in which an act of will is more properly called sinful than the acts of intellect and memory. Thus Peter continues by pursuing this last question.

Why is the intellect not called evil when it thinks some evil thing? On this question Peter reports the opinion that the action of the will is determined to its object in a unique way among the powers. To will an evil is always itself an evil. But it is not so with the other powers. One can think of an evil thing without the thought itself being evil. One can remember an evil, but the memory is not evil. Although thoughts and memories of evil can be evil, they are not necessarily so. What makes them so, Peter notes, is the aim: “For at times one remembers an evil in order to do it, and seeks to understand the truth in order to oppose it.”<sup>41</sup> The goodness or evil of the actions of the intellect or memory wholly depends on the goodness or evil of the act of will which they serve. And the goodness of the act of the will depends on the goodness of the object. But whereas the intellect and memory are able to take a variety of positions in relation to their objects, any positive act of will is determined simply in relation to its object--the goodness of the will’s object becomes the will’s goodness, the evil of an object its sin.

In light of Peter’s final distinction between the natural movement of the will and its free movement toward sin, however, the determination of the will toward its object does not appear to be simple. As Ambrose affirmed, human beings, even while slaves to sin, always will the good by nature. Peter interrogates the sense of nature intended in this affirmation: “For some say that there are two movements, by the first of which human beings naturally will the good. But why do they say naturally, and why natural? Because

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 39.2 (Silano, 196).

such was the movement of human nature at its first establishment, in which we were created without vice, and which is properly called nature; for humans were created righteous in their will.”<sup>42</sup> He cites Fulgentius (misidentified as Gennadius) to the effect that human beings were also endowed with free choice by which they sin, “not by necessity, but by their own will.” The will is called a sin, then, according to this view, insofar as it freely chooses an evil act. But as a natural gift it is only and necessarily good, and this aspect Peter identifies with the *scintilla* of Jerome’s Ezekiel commentary: “And so it is rightly said that man naturally wills the good, because he was established in a good and righteous will; for the higher spark of reason, which, as Jerome says, even in Cain could not be extinguished, always wills the good and hates evil.”<sup>43</sup> The natural righteousness of the will has to do with its original constitution, a “spark of reason” which is distinct from the free choice by which the will sins.

Bonaventure, following several earlier commentators, devotes his commentary on Distinction 39 to an amplification of this last reference in Peter’s text. Bonaventure summarizes Peter’s twofold subject as “the cause of corruption in the deliberative will” and the “rectitude of the human will as it is moved through the mode of nature.”<sup>44</sup> In order to understand Peter’s question, Bonaventure will primarily consider “how human beings naturally want and desire the good on account of the natural judge, which is conscience--that which always dictates the good, and on account of the spark of reason or conscience, which is synderesis--that which always inclines to the good and retracts from

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 39.3 (Silano, 197).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. (Silano, 198).

<sup>44</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39 (Quaracchi II.897.)

evil.”<sup>45</sup> Here Bonaventure appears to subsume the consideration of conscience--which he will define as a cognitive habit--under a more general question of humans’ desire for the good. What this establishes is that the accounts of conscience and synderesis that follow are not two separate entries in a kind of theological lexicon. Rather, the articles on conscience and synderesis together constitute Bonaventure’s attempt to intervene in the questions that Peter poses in his thirty-ninth distinction: Why is the will more corrupted in its act than the intellect? And how can the will be called naturally good if it can be so thoroughly corrupted as to be called evil?

To illuminate these questions Bonaventure must consider together human beings’ desire for the good, the corruption of the will, and the fallibility of human cognition. The treatment of the two articles that follows will also attempt to hold them together. The integration of conscience and synderesis, however, is not total. For reasons both stated and unstated, Bonaventure’s account subordinates the mutual relations between conscience and synderesis to an analogical relationship which maintains a crucial separation between the cognitive and affective operations with respect to the good.

Considered substantially, conscience and synderesis are identical, just as, Bonaventure argues in Distinction 24 of the same book, are reason and will, insofar as the powers of the soul are not substantially distinct from the soul itself.<sup>46</sup> Though he resolves the question of the essence of reason and will there, he prefaces his response by noting that this question is more of curiosity than utility. But though essentially the same, reason and will can be usefully distinguished on the basis of their *operations*. In the discussion

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> 2 Sent. d. 24, a. 2, q. 1 (Quaracchi II.559).

of conscience and synderesis in Distinction 39, his repeated attempts to distinguish them by their operations are distinctive within the history of the concept of synderesis. If speculation about the essence of the powers of the soul is a waste of time, the distinction of the cognitive and the affective must by contrast have some moral or spiritual utility (*utilitas*). The question to ask of this text, then, is not ultimately whether Bonaventure's distinction coheres, but what utility it holds for the spiritual pilgrimage. Given Bonaventure's understanding of the acquisition of knowledge in this text, if synderesis is to have any moral pedagogical value, then it must be affective, since the affect is what moves the soul. And since this affective movement of synderesis toward the good is always right and never extinguished, then it cannot be fully dependent on practical knowledge.

#### *4. Cognition and Affect in Conscience and Synderesis*

In seeking Bonaventure's view of conscience and synderesis, it is important to understand the entire movement of his discussion, and the way in which he builds to his conclusion by means of opposing and supporting arguments. Bonaventure's commentary on 2 *Sentences* 39 begins with the *divisio textus* summarizing Lombard's text and introducing the topic to be discussed further. This is treated in two articles--the first on *conscientia*, the second on synderesis--each containing three questions which may be answered in one of two ways. In each Bonaventure considers several arguments for each position. In most cases, one set of arguments, referred to in the Quaracchi edition as the *fundamenta*, lay out the *auctoritates* and reasoning in support of Bonaventure's eventual *conclusio*. The

other set of arguments *ad oppositum* may contain some sound reasoning and true *auctoritates*, but some misapplication of those authorities leads to a faulty conclusion that Bonaventure will point out in his replies.

While an understanding of the architecture of the commentary is necessary to reading it well, the temptation of the text is to allow the apparently static structure to dull attention to its kinetic and nonlinear argumentation. The multiple voices and questions within each *distinctio* play off of one another and contradict each other in ways that allow for divergent readings of the commentary. Some of these ways are more obvious than others. In many cases, the conclusion itself is incomplete without the arguments presented in the *fundamenta* and the replies to the arguments *ad oppositum*. Thus Bonaventure's conclusion must be sought not only in the *conclusio* but in the entire multivocal movement of the question. Moreover, the order of questions themselves, while not arbitrary, is not that of a proof in which each piece builds upon the last toward a conclusion. The text contains numerous references *supra* and *infra*, some explicit and many implicit, and parts of the text of the first article seem to assume arguments made in the second. Thus the reading that follows will experiment with reading various questions together, moving back and forth between the articles to examine how Bonaventure determines *conscientia* and synderesis in comparison with one another.

Concerning conscience, Bonaventure considers the following: 1) whether it is cognitive or affective; 2) whether it is innate or acquired; and 3) whether it obligates the will to do what it dictates. In the first question, Bonaventure notes that the term *conscientia*, like the term *intellectus*, is equivocal, in that it can refer to the object known

(*conscitus*), the habit by which the object is known, or the potentiality which contains the known object. As known object, conscience is identified with the principles of the natural law, or what John of Damascus calls the “law of our intellect.” As potentiality, conscience is that upon which the natural law is written. In the first and third definitions, then, conscience can name both the interiorly written law and the place of the law’s inscription. The second definition is the most common, Bonaventure explains--a habit of the potentiality by which the natural law is known. As the middle term in these three options, conscience is fixed between these two poles: it is that by which the inscription of the natural law is known and is located at the place in the soul where the law is inscribed, the practical intellect. As practical, it is not knowledge simply--not *scientia* but *con-scientia*. The practical intellect is joined to affection and action by virtue of the common object they share, namely the Good. Conscience takes the good as its object insofar as it belongs to the practical intellect, but this does not make the practical intellect affective. Here Bonaventure cites Aristotle: “For the speculative and practical intellect are the same power, differing only by extension.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, while joined to affection and taking the good as its object, *conscientia* is without doubt a cognitive habit. If it is called motive, it is “not because it effects movement, but because it dictates and inclines to movement.”<sup>48</sup> Bonaventure’s response thus reiterates the claim of the fifth *fundamentum* (argument for the prevailing opinion): the operations of conscience--to read (*legere*), to judge

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<sup>47</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 1, concl. (Quaracchi II.899). Cf. *ibid.*, d. 24, p. 1, a. 2, q. 1, ad 2 (Quaracchi II.558); and Aristotle, *De anima* III.9.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

(*iudicare*), to direct (*dirigere*), to witness (*testificare*), to argue (*arguere*)--are all cognitive functions, and thus conscience is cognitive.

By naming conscience as the habit of the practical intellect, Bonaventure is departing from the line of tradition which he reports in article two, one that holds synderesis to be the superior portion of the power of reason, and conscience to be a habit which directs the inferior reason to the natural law.<sup>49</sup> Bonaventure rejects this view because, insofar as superior reason is able to sin, such a view contradicts Jerome's Commentary on Ezekiel. As Jerome insists, synderesis is never mixed up in the sins of the other powers. Moreover, Bonaventure adds, while superior reason is turned only toward God, synderesis is turned toward the good in God and in one's neighbor.<sup>50</sup>

Bonaventure then considers another account of the relation between synderesis and conscience. This account holds both synderesis and conscience to be habits of reason and will in common as they are moved naturally, just as free choice belongs to reason and will in common as they are moved deliberately. Some, he writes, specify synderesis as

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<sup>49</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.909).

<sup>50</sup> The significance of this distinction is tempered somewhat by Bonaventure's contention that every good is desirable only with reference to the supreme good, as in *De Scientia Christi* IV, fund. 29 (Quaracchi VII.20): "Just as the affect holds itself to the good, so the intellect holds itself to the true, and as every good comes from the highest goodness, so every truth comes from the highest truth. But it is impossible for our affect to be drawn directly to a good without in some way touching the highest good. Therefore, it is impossible for our intellect to know any truth with certitude without in some way touching the highest truth." Similarly, *Itinerarium* III.4 (Boehner and Hayes, 88): "Desire is principally concerned with that which moves it the most. And that which moves it the most is that which is loved the most. And that which is loved the most is to be happy. But happiness is attained only by reaching the best and ultimate end. Therefore, human desire wants nothing but the supreme Good, or that which leads to it or in some way reflects that Good."



the habit of good and bad in universals, and conscience as the habit with regard to particulars. Distancing himself from the views of Philip the Chancellor and Alexander of Hales, both of whom hold synderesis to be in some way shared by reason and will, Bonaventure rejects any view that holds synderesis and conscience to belong to reason and will together. Since he has already demonstrated that conscience belongs to the intellect, if synderesis also belongs even in part to the intellect, then there would have to be some other directive power in the affect--that is, some principle of motion, which can only be affective.<sup>51</sup> This problem is resolved by the third and most probable solution: “Just as from the creation of the soul, the intellect has a light which is a natural judge for it, directing the intellect in what is to be known, so the affect has a certain natural weight, directing it in what is to be desired.”<sup>52</sup> In his question on conscience, Bonaventure distinguished conscience as directing and synderesis as inclining. Here it appears that both are created as directive functions of their respective powers: conscience directs knowledge, and synderesis directs desire. This accords with the fourth *fundamentum*, which claims that “just as the intellect needs a light for judging, so the affect needs a certain spiritual heat and weight for loving rightly. Therefore, just as in the cognitive part of the soul there is a certain natural judge, which is conscience, so also in the affective part of the soul there must be a weight directing and inclining to the good,” which is

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<sup>51</sup> “Sed quia, ut habitum fuit prius, *conscientia* dicit habitum se tenentem ex parte intellectus; aut necesse erit praeter *conscientiam* et *synderesim* ponere in nobis aliquod directivum, aut necesse est ponere, quod *synderesis* se teneat ex parte affectus,” 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 2, q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.910).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

synderesis.<sup>53</sup> Conscience is properly a *habitus*, and synderesis, repeating Philip the Chancellor's phrase, a "habitual power" (*potentia habitualis*). As a *potentia*, synderesis is an inhering capacity of the soul, but, unlike the powers of reason and the deliberative will, synderesis is by nature informed by a habit--that is, inclined toward a particular end. So distinguished, synderesis and conscience are established by analogy as nearly parallel principles of orders which are as closely connected as the light and heat of a single fire, and as different as knowledge and desire.

Whereas the two rejected opinions offer some account of the relation between the operations of conscience and synderesis, the opinion Bonaventure favors posits only an analogy. The problem of the relation between conscience and synderesis is referred to that of intellect and will more generally, and the relation is left unspecified. In this way Bonaventure stands apart from other masters who also describe synderesis as affective. For example, Odo of Rigaud defines synderesis similarly as the natural will toward the spiritual good. But unlike Bonaventure, Odo defines conscience as the conjunction of synderesis and free choice (*liberum arbitrium*). Bonaventure, in contrast, relates conscience and synderesis by analogy and not by relations of dependence. In his response to the incidental question of how synderesis, conscience, and natural law relate to one another, Bonaventure says that "synderesis is to conscience as charity is to faith, or as the habit of affect itself is to the habit of the practical intellect. And natural law pertains commonly to both."<sup>54</sup> The *lex naturalis*, Bonaventure explains, most properly refers to the "collection of precepts" which are the object of both conscience and synderesis.

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<sup>53</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 2, q. 1, fund. 4 (Quaracchi II.908).

<sup>54</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 2, q. 2, ad. 4 (Quaracchi II.911).

### 5. Rectitude and Deviation in Conscience and Synderesis

It must be remembered that here Bonaventure is concerned with what is innate to intellect and will, and not what results from the operation of deliberative reason and will. Just as the will is moved both by deliberation and nature, so the intellect is perfected both by innate and acquired habits. In the second question of Article One, Bonaventure attempts to determine the extent to which the cognitive habit of conscience can be called innate. Like many before him, Bonaventure affirms that conscience is both innate and acquired, but he departs from earlier ways of distinguishing the two aspects. In doing so he undertakes a short excursus on the nature of cognitive habits in general.

Just as Bonaventure rejects arguments that divide synderesis and conscience on the basis of a distinction between universal and particular moral principles, here he dismisses the idea that cognitive habits of universals are innate and that habits of particulars are acquired, or that principles are innate and conclusions acquired. In this Bonaventure rejects the Platonic conception of *anamnesis*, citing both Aristotle, who demonstrates that “cognition of principles is acquired via the senses, memory, and experience,” and Augustine, who holds that the principles of geometry are not innately present to the soul as knowable objects.<sup>55</sup> But, Bonaventure adds (also following Augustine), knowledge requires both a knowable object and a mediating light by which we judge that object.<sup>56</sup> That light is innate and is called a “natural judge.”

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<sup>55</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.902), citing Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* II.19, and Augustine, *De Trinitate* XII.24.

<sup>56</sup> *De Trin.* XII.24.

In the sphere of speculative knowledge, this innate light makes judgments such as, for example, “the whole is greater than its parts.” In the sphere of moral action, this same innate light given to the soul is conscience, by which the intellect makes judgments such as “parents are to be honored.” This does not mean, however, that the command to honor one’s parents is entirely *known* innately. For, Bonaventure argues, “no one would ever know ‘whole’ or ‘part’ or ‘father’ or ‘mother’ without some exterior sense receiving its species.”<sup>57</sup> Thus even first principles, which are called innate since the natural *lumen* of the intellect is sufficient for judging them, are acquired. In order to be known, the intellect must acquire the species or likenesses of things from the senses.<sup>58</sup> Other examples of innate principles include the rule against doing to others what you do not want done to yourself, and to obey God. Such principles are “most evident” to the soul, and innate once the species has been received. But there is a further sense in which particular conclusions, which are less evident to the soul, are acquired: in particulars the intellect must not only receive the species, but also some “additional persuasion and new education.”<sup>59</sup> Conscience contains both innate principles and acquired conclusions: it is innate insofar as it has a natural light by which the most evident principles are judged.

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<sup>57</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.903).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. 1 *Sent.* d. 17, p. 1, art. un., q. 4, concl. (Quaracchi I.301), where Bonaventure denies that a species in the sense of a similitude of a created thing can be innate in the soul. But there are innate species in the soul in the sense of a truth impressed on the soul--rectitude and love are such truths. Also see J.F. Quinn, “St. Bonaventure’s Fundamental Conception of Natural Law,” in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974*, 5 vols. (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1974), I.577.

<sup>59</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.903).

It is acquired both with respect to particular conclusions and with respect to the species necessary for informing the innate principles.

In this way, all knowledge is in part acquired insofar as it depends on external species, or, in other words, all knowledge (in an actual sense) is embodied and linguistic. Thus Bonaventure upholds Aristotle's characterization of the soul created as a "slate on which nothing actual is written."<sup>60</sup> According to Bonaventure this means that external species or likenesses are not innately present to the soul without the aid of the senses.<sup>61</sup> The only knowledge that could be called truly innate, then, would be knowledge that did not derive from an abstracted likeness but is instead known through essence. One knows oneself not through an exterior species, but essentially. Likewise, one knows God essentially and interiorly. Accordingly, with respect to what should be done, the conscience to love and to fear God is wholly innate, since both God and the affections of love and fear are present to the soul essentially.<sup>62</sup> Only knowledge of God--and specifically, the affective dispositions appropriate to God--are entirely innate. All other knowledge, including the principles of the natural law, are in some way acquired.

The question to pursue here, then, is how the innate and acquired aspects of conscience, so understood, relate to the movement of synderesis. If synderesis follows the dictates of conscience, does it follow them only insofar as they are innate and infallible, or does it also follow them with regard to particular conclusions? In the first question on

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<sup>60</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.904), citing *De anima* III.4.

<sup>61</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 3, concl. (Quaracchi II.904 ), citing Aristotle, *De anima* III.4.

<sup>62</sup> "...huiusmodi enim affectus essentialiter sunt in anima," 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 2 (Quaracchi II.904).

synderesis, Bonaventure counterposes conscience as the innate light or natural judge to synderesis as the innate heat or weight of the affect inclining it to the good. But the discussion of conscience as a cognitive habit reveals the limits of that parallel--the habitual power of synderesis is simply innate, whereas conscience is both innate and acquired. It is in this context that Bonaventure attempts to define the relations of dependence between conscience and synderesis, first in the course of resolving whether synderesis can be extinguished, and second in asking whether synderesis can be corrupted through sin.

In his discussion of error and of the possibility of synderesis being extinguished, Bonaventure introduces a distinction between synderesis in itself, and synderesis in its act. Here synderesis appears to be dependent on the particular judgments of conscience as well as its innate light. Virtually every commentator who weighed in on synderesis in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries took up the question of whether it could be extinguished, spurred by Jerome's remark in his Ezekiel gloss that the spark of conscience was "not even extinguished in Cain." Bonaventure follows Jerome's gloss in denying that synderesis, either in itself or in its act, can be extinguished entirely, but admits that its act can be impeded, a distinction that allows for the possibility of human error without attributing that error to synderesis. As was customary in the discussion of this question, Bonaventure distinguishes two acts of synderesis, and two states in which it operates. Its two acts are to incline to the good and to murmur against evil. Its two states are *in viatores* ("wayfarers" or human beings on earth) and in the damned.

Alexander relies on both of these distinctions in his commentary on Peter's *Sentences*, resolving that the act of stimulating to the good can be extinguished *in viatores*, but that the act of murmuring against evil cannot. Odo argues that in the damned synderesis survives only as remorse for punishment, not as hatred of sin. Inheriting all of these distinctions, Bonaventure attempts to bring further specificity to the problem by identifying three possible impediments to the act of synderesis. First, the "shadow of blindness" (*tenebra obcaecationis*), which is an error of belief, can impede its murmuring against evil in the living. Second, the "lasciviousness of pleasure," which is a carnal sin, can also dull the remorse of sin in the living. And, third, the "hardness of obstinacy" can impede the stimulus to the good in the damned who are confirmed in evil, so that all that remains of synderesis in them is the remorse over the pains of punishment.

At least in the case of blindness, if not also in the case of lust, synderesis is impeded by a cognitive error--or more specifically, cognitive error can impede synderesis in its act of fleeing evil. If, as it appears, this list is exhaustive, it means Bonaventure maintains that synderesis, in its act of inclining human beings to the good, can never be impeded as long as the soul is *in via*. As Bonaventure will explain in the following question, it can fail to produce its effect of movement toward the good, on account of the resistance of the other powers. But here Bonaventure does not name the inclination to the good among the acts of synderesis which can be impeded in the living. "On account of the shadow of blindness synderesis is impeded so that it doesn't murmur against evil, because the evil is believed to be good--just as in heretics, who, dying for the impiety of their errors, believe that they are dying for the piety of their faith. And therefore they feel

no remorse, but in fact feel a false and vain joy.”<sup>63</sup> He elaborates on this point in his reply to the third argument for the rejected position. That argument states that “heretics will endure death for their error without any remorse of conscience. If, therefore, synderesis is supposed to murmur against evil, and in the heretics it does not murmur at all, it seems that it is totally extinguished in them.”<sup>64</sup>

In the first question on conscience, Bonaventure explains the relationship between the remorse of conscience and the affective response of synderesis in reply to the objection that, since conscience has remorse, it must be affective: “Conscience is said to have remorse because, when it shows some evil to the affect having rectitude, it introduces remorse because that affect retracts. Whence remorse is not from conscience principally moving, but from conscience dictating.”<sup>65</sup> This is the clearest statement Bonaventure makes in the text that the affective movement of synderesis is a response to the cognitive presentation of conscience, and it is affirmed in his discussion of the error of heresy here. In reply to the argument that, since heretics feel no remorse, synderesis is extinguished in them, Bonaventure concedes that “in this case it does not carry out the function of murmuring against the errors because of which they are killed. Yet it is not extinguished, because it murmurs against other evils, and against that which the heretics believe to be evil.”<sup>66</sup> The first point is straightforward: synderesis is not extinguished in heretics because it rightly detests evil in *something*. Heretics could, for example, rightly

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<sup>63</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 2, q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.912).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 1, ad. 4 (Quaracchi II.900).

<sup>66</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 2, q. 2, ad. 3 (Quaracchi II.913).



feel remorse over murder, even if they feel none for their blasphemy. This alone would be enough to establish that synderesis is not extinguished. But Bonaventure adds that it murmurs against that which the heretics believe to be evil. A heretic's belief as to what is evil, though, is a mistaken belief, and if synderesis followed this belief, synderesis would then be implicated in the error of conscience.

In the following question, however, synderesis appears to be more autonomous with respect to judgment, thus portraying a different picture of relationship between intellect and affect as regards the natural rectitude that remains in human beings after sin. The question is not whether the act of synderesis is impeded, but whether synderesis can be said to sin or err. Bonaventure upholds the opinion of Philip, Alexander, and Odo, who argue that synderesis does not in itself sin, but can “fall,” or fail in its effect. This occurs when the lower powers which it directs do not adhere to the good. But the dominion of synderesis is not the only issue to be considered. Its dependence on an act of cognition also introduces the possibility of error, and so the relation between conscience and synderesis is taken up again.

According to the fourth argument that synderesis can sin, “synderesis follows conscience as its natural judge. But conscience can be correct or incorrect. Therefore it seems necessary that synderesis is sometimes moved rightly, and sometimes moved errantly.”<sup>67</sup> In his response Bonaventure does not deny the premise that conscience precedes synderesis as judge, but he rejects the inference. Conscience consists in both universals and particulars, and while its motion in the case of universals is simple, the

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<sup>67</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 2, q. 3 (Quaracchi II.913).

articulation of particular conclusions involves deliberative reason and a collative motion, connecting and distinguishing between this and that. Thus conscience is capable of error insofar as it descends to particulars. By contrast,

Synderesis, in itself (*quantum est de se*), is moved by a simple motion in murmuring against evil and instigating to the good. Moreover, it is moved not against this or that evil thing, but against evil in universals. Or, if synderesis is in some way inclined to detest this or that evil thing, it is not insofar as it is a this or that, but insofar as it is evil. And thus it is that synderesis does not deviate as conscience errs. Another argument can be given, that synderesis names a natural power itself, as it is possessed of a natural habit, whereas conscience names a habit which is not so much natural as acquired. And nature itself is always moved rightly, but what is acquired can have either rectitude or deviation. So synderesis is always right, but conscience can be right or wrong.

All of these arguments seem to exclude the possibility that synderesis could desire the wrong good on the basis of cognitive error. Synderesis only follows conscience insofar as it judges universals by its innate light, and not insofar as it is acquired.

Yet, like the analogy between synderesis and conscience, this clarification explains less than first appears. Bonaventure has argued that conscience is an acquired habit in two senses: insofar as it depends on the acquisition of species derived from sense to judge universals and particulars, and insofar as it needs supplemental education to judge particulars. Here in discussing error, however, a difficulty in Bonaventure's understanding of "innateness" comes to light. If, as he reiterates here, anything that is acquired exteriorly can be right or wrong, does that extend to the acquisition of species from sense which informs the innate knowledge of the first principles of the natural law? If, as it appears, innate knowledge of the principles of the law is only inchoate without the information of the species, then is there any actual moral knowledge which is entirely free from the possibility of error? If not, then the act of synderesis would either be

susceptible to the same error (a possibility Bonaventure explicitly denies here), or its dependence on cognition would not be a dependence on actual knowledge as such.

In response to the argument that synderesis follows conscience in erring, Bonaventure fortifies the distinction between them in two ways: either synderesis is moved against evil in universals while conscience descends to particulars, or synderesis detests particular evils insofar as they are evil, while conscience considers them as particulars. This betrays some difficulty, perhaps, in sorting out universals from particulars in act, or suggests that distinguishing universals and particulars is less important than safeguarding synderesis from errors of judgment. In either case the conclusion is the same: “And thus it is that synderesis does not deviate as conscience errs.”

Finally, Bonaventure offers another way of responding: synderesis is a natural power perfected by a natural habit, and conscience is more acquired than natural. And, he argues, “nature in itself is always moved rightly, but what is acquired can have either rectitude or deviation.” These last words recall the prologue, in which Bonaventure explains that the intention of *Sententiae* Book Two concerns the state of natural rectitude in which humans were created, and the nature and extent of their deviation. Bonaventure’s conception of synderesis here affirms that human beings’ deviation from their original rectitude was not total: in the natural affective inclination of synderesis, the soul remains ever capable, at least potentially, of moving toward and attaching itself to the good in spite of the fallibility of its understanding.

If this seeming exception to the principle that intellect precedes affect is an anomaly, the complex relationship of synderesis to the intellect instantiates a theme that is not anomalous in Bonaventure's writings: the soul's natural, affective capacity to exceed its intellectual powers and ultimately, to exceed the soul itself. Synderesis names that in the soul which orients it to its original rectitude. As the natural affective capacity for the good, however, it also orients the soul to its final end beyond itself and its own intellectual powers.

## Chapter 2: Elemental Motion and the End of Creation

### 1. *The Soul in Motion*

For Bonaventure synderesis is distinguished among the powers of the soul not as a separate faculty but as a particular capacity for motion, a capacity he describes as the soul's "weight" (*pondus*). The existence of sin, however, demonstrates that the soul is all-too capable of being moved otherwise than towards the good. To understand how the soul can be moved always to the good and still sin, Bonaventure relies on John of Damascus's distinction between the natural and deliberative motions of the soul. This distinction raises its own problems, however, such as how these two motions can coexist in the soul, and highlights the question of what it means to say that the soul has motion at all.

Bonaventure addresses some of these issues immediately following his discussion of synderesis and conscience. After the main sequence of questions and arguments that Bonaventure treats in connection with Peter's thirty-ninth distinction of *Sententiae* Book Two, Bonaventure takes us a number of exegetical problems that Peter's text poses. These discussions, called *dubia* in the Commentary, follow the *quaestio* form of the main articles, but they tend to take up specific interpretive dilemmas--obscurities of vocabulary and apparent contradictions. In the *dubia* to 2 *Sent.* 39 Bonaventure discusses more fully than in the preceding arguments the relationship between the natural and deliberative movements of the will. In the second *dubium* on 2 *Sent.* 39, Bonaventure considers the relation between these two motions, in the form of the question of how the will can be called evil if it is a natural good? If desire moves toward and is transformed into its object, then the will can be called good and evil--good insofar as it always moves to the

good by nature, and evil insofar as it moves toward evil by deliberation. Bonaventure's questions in 2 *Sent.* 39 attempt to understand that by reason of which the will is always called good. Yet the difficulty that Peter's text announces remains--what is the relation between the natural movement to the good and the deliberative movement to sin? Bonaventure considers the objection that "it is impossible, at one and the same time, for the will to be moved by contrary motions, or even disparate motions." In response, he acknowledges the difficulty, and admits that the authorities have understood the relationship between these movements of the will in different ways. Some hold the motion of the natural and deliberative will to be indistinct, and say that a morally wicked act is simply a deformed act of willing a natural good. That is, it is a deformed and morally culpable attempt to attain the natural good of happiness.

But Bonaventure finally rejects this interpretation, wishing to uphold the moral integrity of the natural will to the good, "since, when Ambrose says that human beings naturally will the good, he does not mean only the natural good, which is indeed an act of will, but even the moral good. For human beings desire justice and hate injustice by their natural will."<sup>1</sup> The alternative, which Bonaventure endorses, is to admit two motions of the will, one "by which the will naturally desires the good, and the other by which the will deliberately desires evil."

But even here opinions are divided as to whether the two motions can exist simultaneously. Some say the act of the deliberative will does not exclude the act of the natural will. Others say that, if the power of the will is simple, it cannot be moved by

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<sup>1</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 30, dub. 2 (Quaracchi II.916).

different or contrary motions at the same time. Those who hold this position, Bonaventure argues, claim that synderesis is always in act *habitually*, but not actually. Thus they can claim without contradiction that the natural will is always in act (because it is always capable of acting), and that the will moves to sin from time to time, and that there is only one motion in the will at a time. Bonaventure agrees that the natural will is not always actually in act. “And therefore the text should be understood thus: that the word ‘always’ means the continuity of the habit of willing, not the act.”<sup>2</sup> The substantial operation cannot be taken away, but the consequent operation can be impeded; in other words, the movement of the natural will toward the good is constant, but its realization in a concerted act of the soul is not. Nevertheless, Bonaventure explicitly leaves unresolved the more perplexing question: whether the deliberative *motus* to sin and the natural *motus* to the good can exist in act simultaneously. Can there be two contrary motions in the soul at the same time?

What is clear is that the natural and deliberative motions of the will *should* act together, in whatever way that might be possible. Bonaventure understands moral progress to involve the entire will, natural and deliberative. In the third *dubia* of 2 *Sent.* 39, he clarifies that the natural desire for the good does not make the will good as such. Here he takes up obliquely a question that earlier commentators on synderesis frequently discussed--whether the movement of synderesis is meritorious. Bonaventure responds: “It must be said that the goodness of the will is inchoate in the natural appetite and

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<sup>2</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 30, dub. 2 (Quaracchi II.917).

consummated in deliberative virtue. Nor is the will wholly (*simpliciter*) good and upright unless it is upright insofar as it is moved both deliberatively and naturally.”<sup>3</sup>

The reason why a natural affective motion to the good is not in itself meritorious hints at the ambiguity that I am exploring throughout this dissertation: for Bonaventure the affective part of the soul is the seat of the will and thus of the soul’s capacity for moral, meritorious action. Yet *affectus* itself--what Bonaventure often calls *desiderium* or the soul’s affection for its object, is not properly an act of the soul, and thus its movement does not of itself accrue merit. *Affectus* is the single power by which the soul acts and is acted upon. This ambiguity of action and passion is constitutive of Bonaventure’s notion of affect, both as the medium of the soul’s union with God and in the longing of creation for its source.

## 2. Love, the Unitive Force

Immediately prior to the discussion of the natural and deliberative motions of the will, Bonaventure compares the operations of affect and intellect with regard to Peter’s initial question in 2 *Sent.* 39: why is the will more corrupted in its act than any other power? Why is it a sin to will evil, but it is not necessarily a sin to understand evil? Given that an act’s value depends on its object, the evil of an object of intellect should, it seems, confer evil upon the act of understanding that object. The objection recognizes a distinction between the act of willing and the act of understanding: the former involves a

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<sup>3</sup> “Dicendum, quod bonitas voluntatis inchoatur in appetitu naturali et consummatur in virtute deliberativa; nec est voluntas simpliciter bona et recta, nisi sit recta, in quantum movetur deliberative, et in quantum movetur naturaliter,” 2 *Sent.* d. 39, dub. 2 (Quaracchi II.917).



motion from the will to its object, whereas the latter is accomplished by the motion of the object toward the intellect. Therefore, it seems, the wicked object should pollute the intellect more than the will.

Bonaventure endorses the premise of the objection in his response: willing does indeed involve a motion toward the object, whereas understanding involves a motion of the object toward the intellect.<sup>4</sup> Here then Bonaventure corroborates the division of the powers found elsewhere in his distinction: the will is that which is said properly to have motion, but the intellect remains at rest in its act. Yet, for Bonaventure, this difference in orientation to objects proves that the will is more corrupted in its act than is the intellect, for to move toward the object *transforms* the will into its object, while the intellect is merely *conformed* to its object. To will an evil object is to be transformed by and into that evil. The difference between intellect and will is not, however, simply the *direction* of force involved in the act, but also its *intensity*: “This is so on account of the greater force of union which consists in love itself, just as Dionysius said: ‘We call love [*amor*] the unitive force’<sup>5</sup>; moreover it is said in 1 Corinthians 6: ‘Whoever adheres to God is made one spirit.’” The claim which he makes elsewhere that responsibility--the capacity for merit and blame--is based in the capacity for free choice is tied to a conception of the will

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. 4 *Sent.* d. 49, p. 2, s. 1, a. 3, q. 2, fund. 1 (Quaracchi IV.1020): “All cognition is motion *to* the soul...” and 1 *Sent.* d. 32, a. 2, q. 1, ad.1, 2, 3. (Quaracchi I.562): “Certain acts refer to a motion from a thing to the soul, such as wisdom, while others refer to the motion from the soul to the thing, such as loving [*amare*].” Here Bonaventure explains that while intelligence or understanding conveys a form, an act of love conveys to the soul both a form and an effect.

<sup>5</sup> “Amorem dicimus vim unitivam,” 2 *Sent.* d. 39, dub. 1 (Quaracchi II.916). On the Dionysian reference, see the introduction, nn. 38-39.

as a susceptibility to an intense force which binds the soul to its object, for better and for worse.<sup>6</sup> The affective part of the soul's greater capacity for corruption is also its greater force of union with and transformation into God. The force of union is the force of the object acting on the soul, and the affective part of the soul is its capacity to be *affected* by a good (or perceived good) beyond itself.

This interpretation of affective movement is reinforced in Bonaventure's discussion of *amor* in the first volume of the commentary, where he discusses the relationship between the terms *amor*, *dilectio*, and *caritas*. Though Bonaventure acknowledges shades of meaning in the terms, he does not offer a disjunctive picture of the affect. He defines *amor* as "the adhesion of an affection with respect to the one loved."<sup>7</sup> With this general definition of love, he rejects the opinion that *amor* names a "libidinous affection" while *dilectio* signifies an act of a well-ordered will (*ex voluntate ordinata*). He cites Dionysius in *Divine Names* 4 in support of this conclusion: "Theologians seem to me to signify the same thing by the words *amor* and *dilectio*," with *amor* translating the Greek *eros* and *dilectio* translating *agape*.

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. 2 *Sent.* d. 16, a. 1., q. 1 (Quarrachi 2.393-94), where Bonaventure deploys this definition of love to demonstrate that man is truly an image of God: "Likewise, what is most bound to be united to the other is most bound to be configured and conformed to it--for love [*amor*], because it unites, is said 'to transform the lover into the one loved', just as Hugh of St. Victor says [in *De arrha anima*]--but a rational creature, such as human being, is most bound to be united to God and to tend to Him through love: therefore he is most bound to be configured and assimilated to Him. If, therefore, image names an expressed similitude, it is clear that etc."

<sup>7</sup> "Amor enim dicit affectionis adhaesionem respectu amati," 1 *Sent.* d. 10, dub. 1 (Quaracchi I.205).

Nevertheless, Bonaventure does draw a distinction between the terms: To the basic definition of *amor*, the term *dilectio* adds (*addit*) the sense of election (*electio*). That is, *dilectio* is the adhesion of affection with respect to the loved object chosen out of a number of possible objects. This is the love spoken of in *Song of Songs* 5: “My beloved [*dilectus*], chosen out of a thousand.” Finally, *caritas*, from *carus* or dear, adds to the sense of *dilectio* an appreciation for the great value of the beloved object.

This passage alerts the reader to the importance of attending to the nuance of affective terms in Bonaventure’s writings, yet it would be too simple to expect to find in this passage a legend decoding every discussion of love in Bonaventure’s corpus, or to simply equate *amor* with the will’s natural motion and *dilectio* with deliberation. But this passage demonstrates Bonaventure’s concern to uphold the basic understanding of *amor* that he derives from the Dionysian authority: that love, in every case, is an affective adhesion of lover and loved, a unitive and transformative force. The definition leaves unresolved the ambiguity evident both in the concept of *dilectio* and in the operation of the deliberative will: the soul’s capacity for choice is simply a species of and dependent on the force by which the soul is attracted by and transformed into the object of its desire.

### 3. Aristotle and Elemental Motion

The ambiguity that I am suggesting is constitutive of Bonaventure’s understanding of *affectus* is not unique to him, and it is surely overdetermined with regard to his philosophical and theological sources. Here I am particularly interested in exploring the way in which Bonaventure’s theory of affect depends on a theory of

motion. And while it would be misleading to call Bonaventure's understanding of affective motion "Aristotelian," Aristotle's theory of natural motion and its relation to the soul's movement forms part of the framework of Bonaventure's reflection on affect, and may therefore provide a helpful framework for thinking through aspects of Bonaventure's conception of affective motion, and suggests the intractability of the ambiguity that characterizes the motion of *affectus* in its relation to the intellect and to its object of desire.

Bonaventure uses the term *motus* both of conscience and synderesis. In the discussion of whether synderesis can sin, Bonaventure says that conscience is "not moved by a simple motion alone, but by a collative one."<sup>8</sup> Yet elsewhere Bonaventure suggests that *motus* applies only analogically to the cognitive part of the soul. "Conscience is the habit perfecting our intellect insofar as it is practical, or insofar as it directs in works. And thus the intellect has in a certain way a motive cause, not because it effects movement, but because it dictates and inclines to movement."<sup>9</sup> He is even clearer on this point when, in arguing that synderesis is affective, he writes, "Therefore just as reason is not able to move without the will mediating, so neither can conscience move without synderesis mediating."<sup>10</sup> In attributing motion to the practical intellect and, to a greater extent, to affect, Bonaventure follows the outlines of Aristotle's account of animal motion in *De anima* III.10, reading Aristotle's discussions of the acts of the soul through the thirteenth-century language of *facultates* and *potentias*. Aristotle argues that both

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<sup>8</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 2, q. 3, ad 4 (Quaracchi II.915).

<sup>9</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 1, concl. (Quaracchi II.899).

<sup>10</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 2, q. 1, ad 3 (Quaracchi II.910).

desire and practical intellect together are necessary for motion, but, strictly speaking, it is desire alone--or desire in conjunction with the object of desire--that effects motion.<sup>11</sup>

Bonaventure, like other medieval theorists of the soul, equates the motive part of the soul with the *affectus* (and the natural motive part to synderesis). But, perhaps reflecting the ambiguity in Aristotle's text, or simply reflecting the conjunction of the practical intellect to affect, he also attributes motion, in a less proper sense, to *conscientia* in the cognitive part of the soul. In his discussion of synderesis and conscience, however, Bonaventure leaves unexamined the question of the agent of motion--whether the object of the *affectus* (the *bonum honestum*) is properly considered the cause of motion, or whether the cause is internal to the soul itself. Nevertheless, the question, and its attendant difficulties, may be discerned in Bonaventure's texts by paying close attention to the analogies and the images he uses to describe the soul's natural tendency to motion--as a weight or *pondus* of the soul by which it ascends, just as fire ascends to its natural place.

Though Bonaventure does not cite Aristotle as the source of his account of elemental motion, that account, developed in *Physica* and *De caelo*, influenced medieval cosmological and physical theories through a number of late ancient channels. The geocentric cosmology which underwrites this theory of motion is by no means unique to Aristotle, nor is the presence of such a cosmic scheme in a later author evidence of Aristotelian "influence." His accounts of elemental motion within a geocentric cosmos,

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<sup>11</sup> "Thus it is no surprise that the two things that seem to be productive of movement are desire and practical thinking. It is because of the movement started by the object of desire that the thinking produces its movement, that which is desired being its point of departure. And even imagination, whenever it produces movement, does not do so without desire." Trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (New York: Penguin, 1986), 213.

however, bring into relief a number of conceptual ambiguities that attend any such theory, and so Aristotle, though not an absolute beginning for ancient and medieval physics, is nevertheless a helpful place to start.

The equivocation in *De anima*, which appears to posit both the desire internal to the soul and the external object of desire as the cause of motion, points to a major difficulty in Aristotle's theories of animal self-motion.<sup>12</sup> In an influential essay, David Furley argues that Aristotle needs both accounts of motion to be true in order to maintain a distinction between the motion of animals and the motions of inanimate beings, including the elements, which, rising or falling inexorably to their natural places, may seem to contain some inherent principle of motion themselves.<sup>13</sup> Aristotle considers this problem at greatest length in two places: *Physica* VIII.4 and *De Caelo* IV.3. In the first he states that the natural movements of animals come from themselves, and that in fact all

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<sup>12</sup> Though several passages, such as *Physica* VIII.4, are relevant for this problem, the difficulty is apparent in *De anima* III.10. "In form, then, that which produces movement is a single thing the faculty of desire as such. But first of all is the object of desire, which, by being thought or imagined, produces movement while not itself in motion. In number, however, there is more than one thing that produces movement" (Lawson-Tancred, 215).

<sup>13</sup> Furley suggests that the contradiction can be resolved by holding, as he believes Aristotle implicitly held, that the objects of animal desire are in some way intentional objects, that is, are in some sense internal to perceiving and thinking beings. See Furley, "Self-Movers," in *Aristotle on Mind and the Senses* (Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium Aristotelicum), ed. G.E.R. Lloyd and G.E.L. Owens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 165-80. His argument has been the subject of much debate, much of it collected in the volume (in which Furley's original essay is reprinted) *Self-Motion: From Aristotle to Newton*, ed. Mary Louise Gill and James G. Lennox (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 1994.

self-movement is natural.<sup>14</sup> This is obvious enough, since in book two Aristotle had already defined a *physis* of a thing as a “certain principle and cause of change and stability in the thing.”<sup>15</sup> Natural movement would be that due to a nature, that is, an inhering cause of motion. (The soul of the animal is, by virtue of its embodiment, also susceptible to unnatural, external movements). More difficult is the case of simple bodies--fire, air, water, and earth--and inanimate things composed of them. The simple bodies are natural, and they have their own natural movements: fire moves upward or toward the extremity, earth moves downward or toward the center. But they cannot be self-movers, both because self-motion belongs only to living things, and because, if they moved themselves, they would also have the ability to stop moving. But, though lacking the ability to cause movement, the simple bodies do contain a source of movement: “it is a source which enables them to be affected.”<sup>16</sup> The problem of the natural movements of simple bodies is solved, though only partially, by positing a potentiality to particular kinds of motion in them. So air has the natural capacity to be moved upward--to actualize its potential for rising--if a hindrance is removed.

In *De Caelo*, Aristotle provides greater detail about the nature of elemental motion. Book four presents an inquiry into the meanings of the terms “heavy” and “light,” which constitute “a proper part of the theory of movement, since we call things

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<sup>14</sup> “The change of anything that is changed by itself is natural; this is the case with all animals, for example. For animals are self-movers, and we say that everything which has its own inner source of change is changed naturally.” Trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 196.

<sup>15</sup> Waterfield, 33.

<sup>16</sup> Waterfield, 199.

heavy and light because they have the power of being moved naturally in a certain way.”<sup>17</sup> He considers two previous theories of this natural motion. The first, which he identifies as coming from the *Timaeus*, holds that heaviness is a function of the quantity of identical parts of which a body is composed. If quantity were the determinant of heaviness and lightness, Aristotle counters, then a larger quantity of fire should rise more slowly than a smaller one. But the opposite is in fact the case. He then considers a second theory, which considers lightness a result of the void which is trapped in bodies. He raises a number of objections to this theory before advancing to his own.

In offering his own account, Aristotle provisionally accepts “the common statement of older writers that ‘like moves to like,’” since, he says, “the movement of each body to its own place is motion toward its own form.” Elemental motion would then be a continual process of cosmic sorting, all bodies moving to their own kind. But this principle in itself is not sufficient to explain the determinant motions of elements to fixed positions. To advance the explanation further, Aristotle hypothesizes: “If one were to remove the earth to where the moon now is, the various fragments of earth would each move not towards it but to the place in which it now is.”<sup>18</sup> The reason for this surprising conclusion, Aristotle continues, is consistent with the principle that like seeks like, and indicates that natural place is not a fixed grid but a clustering of elements. For what

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<sup>17</sup> *De Caelo* IV.1, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, trans. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 454. In the first complete Latin translation of the work, by William of Moerbeke c. 1260, the terms are “grave” and “leve.” Robert Grosseteste produced an incomplete translation of the work several years earlier, but this did not include book 4.

<sup>18</sup> McKeon, 459.



bodies move toward when they move toward their like is a common *form*. A thing's natural "place" is the boundary that contains it, and this boundary is simply the thing's form, and so "it is to its like that a body moves when it moves to its own place."<sup>19</sup> The natural place of a simple body *is* its form; its tendency to movement toward that place is its potential for its own form; its attainment of that place is its actualization. The change that is natural motion, then, is explainable as a species of alteration in general: "Thus to ask why fire moves upward and earth downward is the same as to ask why the healable, when moved and changed *qua* healable, attains health and not whiteness."<sup>20</sup> The difference with elemental motion, and what makes the elements seem to have some internal source of their motion (even though in fact they are moved by their natural place), is that they are "closest to matter." That is, the simple bodies appear to have some internal agent of motion, because they are observed to move so determinately, so inexorably, to their place (and because there is no visible external agent of change acting upon them). Whereas, according to *De anima* III.10, the soul moves itself through a complicated interplay of desired object, the faculty of desire, and the practical intellect, the simple bodies are moved immediately by the form, their place, which is external to them.

Bonaventure's discussion of synderesis and conscience explicitly refers to Aristotle's theory of animal motion. But his description of natural motion as a weight by which the will is drawn more closely resembles the Aristotelian explanation of bodily, elemental motion. What are for Aristotle two different kinds of motion proper to two

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<sup>19</sup> McKeon, 460.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

different kinds of beings--the self-motion of the soul and the external motion of bodies--are for Bonaventure two kinds of motion--natural and deliberative, belonging to, though not simply internal to, the soul.

#### 4. Augustine and the pondus amoris

A number of Christian theologians saw in the movement of elements a fitting description of the soul's tendency to the good. Perhaps the deepest resonance in Christian literature of the theme of the "weight" of the soul is in the final book of Augustine's *Confessiones*, as he expands the scope of his inquiry to the whole created order:

A body inclines by its own weight towards its own place (*Corpus pondere suo nititur ad locum suum*). Weight does not always tend towards the lowest place, but to its own proper place. Fire tends upward, stones tend downward: they are both led by their weight, seeking their place (*ponderibus suis aguntur, loca sua petunt*). Oil poured into water, rises again above the water, but water poured over oil will sink beneath the oil: they are both led by their weight, seeking their place (*ponderibus suis aguntur, loca sua petunt*). When things are out of order, they are not at rest; coming to order, they find rest. My love is my weight (*Pondus meum amor meus*). By it I am carried wherever I am carried. By your gift we are inflamed and carried upwards; we are enkindled and we set off (*imus*). In our hearts we rise as we sing a song of ascent. By your fire, your good fire, we are inflamed and we rise (*imus*)...<sup>21</sup>

Augustine puts the movement of bodies in the passive voice: by weight all things are led (*aguntur*) to their place. *Pondus* is the capacity for being moved in a certain way, whether in the physical bodies or in the human soul. As Augustine writes just before the cited passage, "Our place is where we come to rest. Love carries us there."<sup>22</sup> The passage

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<sup>21</sup> *Confessiones* XIII.9. Latin text ed. James O'Donnell, *Confessions: Introduction and Text* (vol. 1) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 187.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

hesitates between the active and passive, locating in love the point at which activity and passivity meet, where the distinction is confounded, since the love felt by the soul for God is never truly its own. This is far from Aristotle's account of motion, and yet there is an echo of the Aristotelian hesitation in *De anima* III, between desire and the object of desire, *orexis* and *orektikon*, as the agent of affective movement.

For Augustine, if *pondus* is the capacity to be moved, it is also that by which all things *loca sua petunt*: seek or strive for their place. Aristotle's own writings about the elements in motion, though denying an internal source of change, suggest some kind of desire or longing for place. With the term *peto* Augustine too attributes some kind of desire to material bodies. He expands on this theme in *De civitate Dei* XI: "If we were stones or waves or wind or fire, or something like these, without any sense or life, we would nevertheless not be without a certain appetite [*appetitus*] for our own place and order. For the movement produced by weight is, as it were, the body's love [*amor*], whether it bears downward by heaviness or upward by lightness. Just as a body is carried by its weight, so is the soul carried wherever it is carried by its love."<sup>23</sup> On one level, this passage works precisely to distinguish human beings from stones or waves, since love in the human soul seeks the Creator and not simply place, or fruitfulness, or sensual goods. But what grounds the comparison of human beings to inanimate bodies is a common term, *appetitus*, which all things have in common and which functions in an analogous

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<sup>23</sup> "Si essemus lapides, aut fluctus, aut uentus, aut flamma, uel quid eiusmodi, sine ullo quidem sensu atque uita, non tamen nobis deesset quasi quidam nostrorum locorum atque ordinis appetitus. Nam velut amores corporum momenta sunt ponderum, siue deorsum grauitate, siue sursum leuitate nitantur. Ita enim corpus pondere, sicut animus amore fertur, quocumque fertur." *De civitate Dei* XI.28.

way in bodies and in rational souls. The force of the comparison is that the love of God is as natural to the soul as downward or upward motion is to stones and flames.

One of the most striking differences between Augustine's description of *pondus* in the *Confessiones* and Aristotle's *baros* is Augustine's claim that weight does not always tend toward the lowest place, that is, toward the element of earth. In *De caelo* Aristotle argues at some length that weight is the principle of downward motion (or, what amounts to the same in a geocentric cosmos, motion towards the center). While even air has some weight, Aristotle maintains that pure fire is absolutely light, that is, absolutely without weight. For Augustine here, *pondus* signifies a natural appointment to a proper level or place within the physical order and has no contrary. Augustine discusses *pondus* most frequently as the last term in a triad of properties of all created things--measure, number, and weight--following Wisdom 11:21, "God ordained all things in measure, number, and weight."<sup>24</sup> In the fourth book of *De Genesi ad litteram*, Augustine discusses the role of this triad in God's creation: "Measure set a mode on everything, number bestows form, and weight draws everything to rest and stability. And God is all three of these things originally, truly, and uniquely, who limits all, and forms all, and orders all."<sup>25</sup> As the means by which God ordained his creation, *mensura*, *numerus*, and *pondus* are not only properties of bodies.

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<sup>24</sup> For an overview of this theme in Augustine's writings see C. Harrison, "Measure, Number and Weight in Saint Augustine's Aesthetics," *Augustinianum* 28 (1988), 591-602. See also Olivier du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin: genèse de sa théologie jusqu'en 391* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1966), 279-81.

<sup>25</sup> *De Genesi ad litteram* IV.3, *CCSL*, vol. 47, ed. B. Dombart (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 99.

Measure, number, and weight can be observed and understood not only in stones and wood and such corporeal things with mass and quantity, whether terrestrial or celestial. There is also the measure of something to be done, lest it run out of control and out of bounds; and there is the number of the affections and virtues of the soul, by which the soul is drawn away from the deformity of foolishness and drawn towards the form and splendor of wisdom; and there is the weight of the will and of love, in which appears the value of what is to be desired (*appetendo*), what is to be avoided (*fugiendo*), and what is to be given priority.<sup>26</sup>

The weight of the soul is not a quantity or a function of mass as it is in bodies, but like the *pondus* of the body, the *pondus* of the will or love is a principle of movement--that by which the soul seeks what is good and flees what is not. In the case of both bodies and the soul, as Augustine writes, *pondus* is that which “draws each thing to repose and stability.” By contrast, Augustine identifies a further sense of measure, number, and weight to which the others are subordinated. “And there is a measure without measure, to which must be reckoned all that is from it, though it is not from anything else; there is a number without number, by which all things are formed, though it itself is not formed; and there is a weight without weight, to which those whose rest is pure joy find that rest, though it is still not drawn to any other.”<sup>27</sup> In one sense God can be said to have *mensura*, *numerus*, and *pondus* insofar as God the source and destination of all created beings; but in himself he is without measure, without number, and without weight. God is not subject to limit, to form, or to being moved.

*Pondus* in creatures, then, would seem to refer simply to the passivity to being moved. But there is an ambiguity to Augustine’s notion of weight in the soul: on analogy

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., IV.4 (Dombart, 100)

<sup>27</sup> “...pondus sine pondere est, quo referuntur ut quiescant, quorum quies purum gaudium est, nec illud jam refertur ad aliud,” *ibid.*

with the weights of material bodies, Augustine suggests that the soul has a particular weight by which it moves to its appointed place. But elsewhere, *pondus* in the soul appears less determined. If every body has a specific weight drawing it to its proper place, the weight of the soul may be a means of ascent or descent. As the passage from the *Confessiones* cited above states, by love I am carried *wherever* I am carried. If the soul can be carried aloft by the love of the Spirit, it can also descend by the *pondus cupiditatis* into the depths of sin--the depths being not an local, physical place, but the inordinate passions “which drag us downward to love of worldly concerns.”<sup>28</sup> In *De libero arbitrio*, Augustine compares the will’s movement to the movement of a falling stone. While both the will and the stone’s movements are proper to them, the movements are dissimilar in that “a stone lacks the power to restrain the motion by which it is carried downward, but the soul is not moved to abandon higher things for inferior things only so long as it does not will it. Therefore the stone’s motion is natural, but the soul’s is voluntary.”<sup>29</sup> It would be beyond absurd, he continues, to attribute moral culpability to the stone for falling, since it is naturally moved downward. But when the soul descends to the depths, this is a voluntary movement in that it results from an abandonment of the love which bears the soul aloft and is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>28</sup> “...quomodo dicam de pondere cupiditatis in abruptam abyssum, et de sublevatione charitatis per Spiritum tuum, qui superferebatur super aquas?” *Conf.* XIII.7

<sup>29</sup> “in potestate non habet lapis cohibere motum quo fertur inferius, animus uero dum non uult non ita mouetur ut superioribus desertis inferiora diligat. et ideo lapidi naturalis est ille motus, animo uero iste uoluntarius,” *De libero arbitrio* III.1, *CCSL* 29, ed. W. M. Green (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970) 211-321 at 260.

The soul, then, is capable of a downward movement which is to be distinguished from elemental movement by the presence of volition. Augustine is also careful to distinguish the interior downward movement of the soul from the motion of bodies. In the *Confessions* 13.7, Augustine reflects on the difficulty of speaking about the motions of the soul. The depths to which we sink are not places, he admits, but states of the soul--affections, loves, and impure spirits--and yet they are not entirely unlike places. *Quid similius, et quid dissimilius?* Augustine does not answer his own question, leaving the analogy, and its attendant ambiguities, for later medieval theologians to parse.

#### 5. *The Place of the Soul: William of St. Thierry's De natura et dignitate amoris*

In the twelfth century, the Cistercian abbot William of St.-Thierry was also concerned with the applicability of *locus* to the soul and to God. His caution against the theory that the soul is localized in the body does not inhibit him from fully embracing the theme of the soul's movement to its natural place. In the prologue to his treatise on the growth of love in the religious novice, *De natura et dignitate amoris*, William identifies love as "a force (*vis*) of the soul, carrying (*ferens*) it by a certain natural weight (*naturali quodam pondere*) to its place or destination (*locum vel finem suum*).<sup>30</sup> Here the Augustinian theme of love as the weight by which the soul ascends is reprised, only with a greater emphasis on the proper *place* of the soul. "Every creature, whether spiritual or corporeal, has a fixed place (*certum locum*) to which it is naturally carried, and a certain natural weight by which it is carried. For weight, as a certain philosopher correctly

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<sup>30</sup> William of St. Thierry, *De natura et dignitate amoris* n. 1, CCCM 88, ed. P. Verdeyen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 177.

teaches, does not always move downwards. Fire rises, water descends, and so on.”<sup>31</sup>

Whatever William may understand incorporeal place to be (a question that will be revisited below), his statement here must be read as more than a simple metaphor--bodies do not possess weight or a place in a truer sense than do spiritual creatures. All creatures--corporeal or spiritual--are alike in possessing *pondus* and having a proper place. Nevertheless, determining the weight and place of the elements such as fire and water, as William well observes, is a simpler thing than explaining precisely what is proper to spiritual place. And when it is a question of human beings, composed of bodies and souls, the situation becomes even more complicated:

Human beings are also moved by their weight, which carries the spirit upward, and the body downward, both toward their place or destination. What is the place of the body? Scripture replies: ‘You are earth and to earth you shall return’. Yet it says in the *Book of Wisdom* concerning the spirit, “and the spirit returns to God who created it.” Look at humans in their disintegration, how completely they are carried along by their own weight to their place. When things go well and according to order, the spirit returns to God who created it, and the body to earth, not only to earth but into the elements from which it was composed and formed. When earth, fire, water, and air reclaim for themselves something of it, when there is a natural disintegration of a natural composite, each part returns by its own weight to its own element. The disintegration is complete when all of them are restored to their proper place.<sup>32</sup>

It is a poignant description of the human being, a fragile composite whose members are all out of place. The physical elements that compose the body find, without deviation, their proper place upon the corruption of the body. Here the likeness of spiritual weight to corporeal weight also breaks down: “While not one of the elements deviates from its natural course, only the miserable soul and degenerate spirit, corrupted by the vice of sin,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



although by itself naturally tending to its place, does not know or learns with difficulty how to return to its origin.”<sup>33</sup> Why, if love is a natural force within the soul, must it be learned by the soul, when the physical elements move immediately to their places?

In the prologue William explains that love is implanted in the soul by the “Creator of nature,” so that, barring love’s destruction by “adulterous affections,” it teaches the soul from within how to love properly. In the rest of the treatise William describes the process of preparing oneself to receive that teaching within the structure of a monastic community. He describes the will as the *affectus* of the rational soul, that is, the soul’s capacity to be filled with good (by grace) and with evil (by its own failings). Love is kindled when, by grace, the will fixes itself to the Holy Spirit, for love is “nothing other than the will vehemently attached to something good.”<sup>34</sup> In the beginning stages of this love, the religious novice engages in the hard labor of self-discipline and at the hand of an external authority, until, under the direction of his own reason, the external regulations he has been following impress themselves on him interiorly.

As the novice grows into spiritual maturity, his love is illumined (*illuminari*) by God. At this stage, the love which was previously guided by reason and inculcated in the performance of exterior commands begins to “pass over [*transire*] into the *affectus*.”<sup>35</sup>

*Affectus* is an intricate and multivalent term in William’s writings.<sup>36</sup> In the most general

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> *De natura et dignitate amoris* n. 4 (Verdeyen, 180).

<sup>35</sup> *De natura et dignitate amoris* n. 12 (Verdeyen, 186).

<sup>36</sup> See Thomas Davis’s discussion of William’s notion of *affectus* appended to his translation of *The Mirror of Faith*, Cistercian Fathers Series 15 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1979), 93-95.

sense he uses the term as the capacity of the soul to be moved, with an emphasis on the passivity of the soul to the object of its desire. Here, however, in describing the passing over of love into the *affectus*, William seems to be using the term in a more exalted sense as *charitas*. As he defines it shortly below, “The *affectus* is that which seizes the mind by a kind of general force and perpetual virtue, firm and stable and maintained through grace.”<sup>37</sup> He contrasts this with the various *affectiones* (referred to elsewhere in the work as *affectus* in the plural), which vary with time and circumstance. To be gripped by the enlightened *affectus* is to be held steady from the attacks of the *affectiones*. The enlightened *affectus*, or *charitas*, awakens the five spiritual senses in the soul, and, with its two eyes of *amor* and *ratio*, is able to see God: reason sees God through what He is not, while love abandons itself (*deficere*) in what He is.

Then the soul takes rest from its labors and finds repose in wisdom and the enjoyment of God. But only upon the death of the body does the spirit truly return to its place: “When all things proceed well and according to order, just as we said at the beginning, the weight of each thing bears it to its place: the body to the earth from which it was taken, to be raised up and glorified in its time, and the spirit to God who created it.”<sup>38</sup> The return of the spirit to its origin in God is in accordance with nature, but it is not inevitable like the return of the physical elements to their places. Neither, however, is it a result of an effort of loving. By calling the *affectus* a natural *pondus* of the soul, William makes clear that the love of God is not an act that the soul performs. Its effort is aimed at removing the hindrances to that motion.

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<sup>37</sup> *De natura et dignitate amoris* n. 14 (Verdeyen, 188).

<sup>38</sup> *De natura et dignitate amoris* n. 44 (Verdeyen, 211).

### 6. Bonaventure: *Pondus as Ordinativa Inclinatio*

Though Bonaventure does not offer extended comparisons between elemental motion and the motion of the soul, the theme of *affectus* as a *pondus* of the soul is, I believe, integral to his elaboration of the soul's powers, its sanctification through grace, and its elevation to union with God. Understanding how the term *pondus* operates to explain the natural motion of the soul requires exploring the dynamics of weight in the context of the set of images that Bonaventure uses to illustrate it--the burning and rising of fire. In the *Sentences* commentary and in the *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure's reflections on the formal properties of fire illustrate the dynamics of union--both in the spiritual ascent of the soul to God and in the eschatological return of all things to their source.

Returning once more to Bonaventure's commentary on 2 *Sent.* 39, we can ask more pointedly, what does Bonaventure mean by identifying synderesis as a *pondus* of the will? The two relevant passages are found in Article Two, Question One: Whether synderesis is on the side of cognition or affection. The fourth *fundamentum* reasons that "just as the intellect needs a light for judging, so the *affectus* needs a certain spiritual heat and weight for loving rightly. Therefore just as in the cognitive part of the soul is a certain natural judge, which is conscience, so in the affective part of the soul there will be a weight directing and inclining to the good, and this is synderesis." Bonaventure's debts to (and departures from) the Augustinian tradition of the *pondus amoris* will be discussed further. But first it should be noted that his language is without precedent in earlier medieval accounts of synderesis. Alexander of Hales, commenting on the same section of

Lombard's *Sentences*, asks, "And in the same way as there is a material light in the senses for seeing and in the intellect for understanding truth, why would there not be in the motive force a light to the good, always turning away from evil?" Elsewhere in the same text, he writes that synderesis "lights and burns (*lucet et ardet*), and is thus always opposed to darkness, and thus to sin."<sup>39</sup> Alexander sets up a parallel between material light, intellectual light, and a motive or affective light. By positing an affective light to the good, Alexander seems to be suggesting that there is some cognitive component to the affect, an idea that is not at all unprecedented in ancient and medieval theories of the soul.<sup>40</sup> What is remarkable is how differently Bonaventure draws the lines. For Bonaventure there is no "affective light"--such an image confuses the operations of the cognitive and affective parts of the soul, and confuses the affect's movement toward the Good with the practical intellect's illumination of that good.

Dispensing with the light metaphor for synderesis also represents a departure from Bonaventure's other teacher and predecessor Odo of Rigaud. Odo considers approvingly a slightly different optic metaphor in answering how synderesis can be free of error: "Otherwise we could say that conscience and synderesis differ just as light and vision, so that synderesis is, as it were, light, but conscience is the vision enabled through that light. Whence it is able to see rightly and wrongly, without there being an error in the

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<sup>39</sup>Alexander of Hales, 2 *Sent.* d. 40 (Lottin 2.1, 176).

<sup>40</sup> For a helpful overview of the relation of emotions and cognition in ancient theories of the soul, see Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 5-110.

light.” Odo’s analogy tightens the connection between synderesis and conscience, enlisting synderesis in the service of the judgment.

Bonaventure, in shifting the register of synderesis from “light” to “heat,” is drawing an even tighter connection between conscience and synderesis, insofar as the analogy refers to two properties of the same substance, i.e., fire. In fact, the attributions of *calor* and *pondus* can be seen to be governed by the analogy to fire. In 2 *Sent.* 14 Bonaventure identifies three formal properties (*proprietates*) of fire: *luminositas*, *caliditas*, and *levitas*, “through which it is moved through an upward motion” (*per quam movetur motu, qui est sursum*).<sup>41</sup> By comparing synderesis and conscience to different properties of a single substance, Bonaventure paradoxically sharpens the distinction between them.<sup>42</sup> If the light, heat, and weight of fire are concurrent, they are not dependent upon one another. The contrast between light, heat, and weight expresses a very different relationship than that between light and vision: the properties may be concurrent without one being dependent upon the other.

In his conclusion Bonaventure does not revisit the theme of synderesis as heat (*calor*), preferring instead the term *pondus*: “The *affectus*,” he writes, “has a certain natural weight, directing it in what is to be desired (*in appetendis*).”<sup>43</sup> The term weight is more instructive since, just as in fire *levitas* is that by which it is moved upwards, with synderesis Bonaventure is interested in its motion. As he clarifies later, synderesis is not

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<sup>41</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 14, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2, ad 2, 3 (Quaracchi II.340).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. 2 *Sent.* d. 24, p. 1, a. 2, q. 1, ad 7 (Quaracchi II.562), in which, arguing for the distinction of reason and will as different powers, suggests that the sun heats and illumines by means of different powers.

<sup>43</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 39, a. 1, q. 1, concl. (Quaracchi II.910).

essentially distinct from the concupiscible, irascible, and rational powers (the triad named in the Cistercian, pseudo-Augustinian treatise *On the Spirit and the Soul*),<sup>44</sup> but differs in its mode of movement which, invoking Jerome's gloss, is to fly over the other powers, high above their errant motions.

But the term *pondus*, unlike *calor*, also has resonances in Bonaventure's contemporary work that are not limited to the metaphor of fire. *Pondus*, as part of the Augustinian triad of *pondus*, *numerus*, *mensura*, is integral to Bonaventure's metaphysics of creation in the *Breviloquium*. Bonaventure wrote the *Breviloquium*, or *Brief Discourse* of theology, during his tenure as master of Theology (c. 1257). There *pondus* signifies a created, intrinsic property by which all creatures, corporeal and incorporeal, are moved to their end. Bonaventure writes that "the whole structure of the world [*universitas machinae mundialis*] was brought to being in time and out of nothingness by one first, single, and highest principle, whose power, though without measure, disposed all things in a certain weight, number, and measure [*in certo pondere, numero et mensura*]."<sup>45</sup> As he explains, the attribution of measure, number, and weight to all creatures is a statement about their threefold cause:

The phrase "in a certain weight, number, and measure" indicates that creation is the effect of the Trinity creating through a threefold kind of causality: as efficient cause, by which there is unity, mode, and measure in creatures; as exemplary cause, by which there is truth, species, and number in creatures; and as final cause, by which there is goodness, order, and weight in creatures. These vestiges

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<sup>44</sup> There is no modern edition; J. P. Migne includes the work in the appendix to the works of Augustine (under uncertain authorship) in the *Patrologia Latina* 40:779-832. Bernard McGinn's English translation appears in *Three Treatises on Man: A Cistercian Anthropology* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 179-288.

<sup>45</sup> *Breviloquium* 2.1 (Quaracchi V.219).

of the Creator are found in all creatures, whether corporeal, or spiritual, or composites of both.<sup>46</sup>

In *De Genesi ad litteram*, Augustine, too, correlates *mensura*, *numerus*, and *pondus* with *modus*, *species*, and *ordo*.<sup>47</sup> Bonaventure explains the relation between creator and creature by means of a threefold causality derived from the fourfold Aristotelian scheme. The properties of creatures are expressions of their relationship to God as their maker, exemplar, and end.

Later in the same chapter of the *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure repeats, almost to the word, the same formulation, only this time instead of *numerus* he uses the term *discreta--distinction--*and he appends a gloss to *pondus*--“for *pondus* is an ordering inclination” (*ordinativa inclinatio*).<sup>48</sup> It is clear then, that *pondus* is not primarily a physical quantity which is analogously, or metaphorically, *applied* to incorporeal things. Rather, in its most literal application, *pondus* is an ordering tendency directing creatures toward God as their final cause. This is true of the weight of bodies as well as the weight of souls.

But even in the human being, according to various statements in the *Breviloquium*, the *pondus* of the human being is complex. First of all, Bonaventure says explicitly that all creatures have measure, number and weight, whether those creatures are spiritual, material, or composite, as is human nature. Whereas, for William, the weight of

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> In 1 *Sent.* d. 3, p. 1, dub. 3 (Quarrachi I.79), Bonaventure correlates the triad of measure, number, and weight with Dionysius’s triad of *substantia*, *virtus* et *operatio* and Peter Lombard’s triad of *unitas*, *speciem*, and *ordinem*

<sup>48</sup> *Brev.* 2.1 (Quaracchi V.219).

the human soul was to be distinguished from the weight of the human body, each going its own way upon disintegration, Bonaventure does not make that distinction. Perhaps, then, Bonaventure has in mind a tighter integration of soul and body in the human being, ordained to one *pondus* or ordering inclination. Yet Bonaventure elsewhere seems to suggest that the weight of the human person is multiple, or, rather, variable. In fact, in Part Five he suggests that the proper weight of the soul is something that must be achieved through the ordering of the soul, which occurs through grace.<sup>49</sup> These statements point to the complexity in Bonaventure's conception of the *pondus* of human beings in light of his statements about human beings' dependence on grace.

This complexity is apparent throughout Part Five of the *Breviloquium*, which treats the grace of the Holy Spirit. Grace, he begins, is a gift infused by God, by which the soul is "perfected and made the bride of Christ, daughter of the eternal Father, and temple of the Holy Spirit."<sup>50</sup> It is a gift that cleanses, enlightens, and lifts up the soul. And the lifting up of the soul is at the same time the condescension of God, not through his essence but through "an outpouring emanating from him."<sup>51</sup> What is this movement of ascent that is at the same time a descent? It is not that "the spirit is elevated above itself in place (*per situm localem*)" but takes on the form of God (*per habitum deiformem*). And the elevation, so understood, is not effected "through a habit naturally inserted, but only

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<sup>49</sup> *Brev.* 5.8 (Quaracchi V.273).

<sup>50</sup> *Brev.* 5.1 (Quaracchi V.252).

<sup>51</sup> "Deus non condescendit per sui essentiam incommutabilem, sed per influentiam ab ipso manantem," *ibid.*



through an infused gift divinely given.”<sup>52</sup> In one movement, the soul ascends to God when God condescends in grace to the soul.

In the subsequent chapters of part five, Bonaventure traces the operations of grace in relation to sin, virtue, and meritorious acts. Grace has three senses. In its most general sense, grace is a gift to all creatures enabling them to continue to exist. Since creatures are created from nothing, they would revert to nothing without the continual support of their Principle. Bonaventure’s term for this contingency is *vanitas*, itself a kind of weight whose motion God hinders through his presence in all things. He draws the comparison to someone holding some heavy object (*corpus ponderosum*) in mid-air. If the object is released, it will fall down.<sup>53</sup> Though he does not call *vanitas* the weight of creatures, his simile makes it clear that the *pondus* of creatures, properly speaking, is itself the presence of grace, God’s action in sustaining all creatures from reverting to nothingness.<sup>54</sup>

This general grace is a gift to all creatures, from stones to human beings. The other two senses of grace pertain only to the rational spirit: Grace in its special sense (sometimes called actual grace) prepares the rational spirit for receiving the third grace. This sanctifying grace makes the soul capable of attaining merit and advancing to salvation. This is the grace of which Augustine wrote, it “prevenes in the will, so that it

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<sup>52</sup> “...illud non potest esse per habitum aliquem naturaliter insertum sed solum per donum divinitus gratis infusum...” *Brev.* 5.1 (Quaracchi V.253).

<sup>53</sup> 1 *Sent.* d. 37, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1, concl. (Quaracchi I.639).

<sup>54</sup> For a concise and helpful presentation of Bonaventure’s conception of *vanitas*, see Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Great Medieval Thinkers), New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 107-108.

wills, and follows the act, so that it does not want in vain.”<sup>55</sup> Bonaventure then examines the workings of sanctifying grace as a remedy for sin, in the virtues, the gifts of the Spirit, the five spiritual senses, and other aspects of sanctification. Then he turns to examine the workings of grace in meritorious acts: belief in the articles of faith, the ordering of the affections, the performance of the divine law, and petitioning God in prayer.

It is in the context of the ordering of affections that Bonaventure discusses the *pondus* of the soul. Four things must be loved with *caritas*--God, ourselves, our neighbor, and our body. Since the ultimate end of loving is the ordering of oneself to the Good in which human beings find rest and enjoyment, charity is due, first, to God, who is that Good, and secondarily to ourselves and our neighbors, who will be made capable of enjoying the Good, and finally to our bodies, which will be beatified with the spirit and will share in this enjoyment. To love these things properly, however, the soul's affections must be brought to order, *against* their own reflexive tendency: “Love (*amor*), the weight of the soul (*mens*), and the origin of every spiritual affection (*omnis affectionis mentalis*), is brought back toward the self with ease, extends to the neighbor with difficulty, and is raised up to God with greater difficulty.”<sup>56</sup> Because the soul in loving tends toward itself and its body, it needs ordering by two commandments--to love God and to love one's neighbor.

In addition to the commandments, God has given another grace for ordering the affections: “Charity is the root, form, and end of virtue, at the same time joining everything to its final end and binding all things together in order. Thus charity is the

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<sup>55</sup> *Brev.* 5.2 (Quaracchi V.253), citing Augustine, *Enchiridion* 32.9.

<sup>56</sup> *Brev.* 5.8 (Quaracchi V.262).

weight of ordered inclination and the bond of perfect union.”<sup>57</sup> By using the term *pondus* both for the reflexive love of the soul and for the ordering grace of charity, Bonaventure casts the ordering of the affections and the sanctification of the affect as a kind of play of forces. The weight of the soul is transformed by the pull of a greater weight, which draws up the affections of the soul and binds them to God and to neighbor, and, in an extended sense, binds them to everything in creation. For as charity orders, hierarchizes, it at the same time unifies.<sup>58</sup> Charity should not be understood simply as a gift to the soul or an aid in moral progress, but as an eschatological telos of creation. As Bonaventure writes, concluding this section: “With this union consummated through the bond of charity, God will be all in all in true eternity and perfect peace. Through love all things will be ordered to communion and bound in an indissoluble connection.”<sup>59</sup> When Bonaventure writes that all things will be in “perfect peace,” this, he later explains, is to be understood not simply as a psychological state of the human being, but as a perpetual state of cosmic

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<sup>57</sup> “Et caritas ipsa est radix forma et finis virtutum iungens omnes cum ultimo fine et ligans omnia ad invicem simul et ordinate; ideo ipsa est pondus inclinationis ordinatae et vinculum colligationis perfectae,” *Brev.* 5.8 (Quaracchi V.262).

<sup>58</sup> On Bonaventure’s notion of “hierarchization,” see Chapter 3 n. 42.

<sup>59</sup> *Brev.* 5.8 (Quaracchi V.262). This bond of charity is also the principle of unity of the *ecclesia* as the mystical body of Christ. See Peter Fehlner, *The Role of Charity in the Ecclesiology of St. Bonaventure* (Rome: Miscellanea Franciscana, 1965).

quiescence, in which the heavenly motions which mark time and the simple elements now in flux will all come to rest.<sup>60</sup>

But though the final state is one of repose, the events leading up to it are anything but peaceful. At the final judgment, a fire will devour the face of the earth--though not completely:

It is said that “the form [*figura*] of this world will pass away,” not in the sense of the complete destruction of this sensible world, but that through the action of that fire inflaming all elemental things, plants and animals will be consumed, and the elements will be purified and made new, especially air and earth, and the just will be purified and the wicked will be consumed in flame. With these things accomplished, the motion of the heavens will cease, so that, with the number of the elect fulfilled, the bodies of the world will in a certain way be made new and rewarded.<sup>61</sup>

Just as the association of the affective movement of the soul with fire evokes, as well, the ancient Stoic conception of fiery *pneuma* as the motive and animating substance of the body and of the cosmos, the influence of the ancient Stoic vision of a periodic conflagration that renews the cosmos is evident in Bonaventure’s depiction of the final

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<sup>60</sup> As Jay Hammond notes, Bonaventure invokes the concept of *pax* frequently in his works to mean “right order.” “Order in the *Itinerarium*,” in J. A. Wayne Hellman, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure’s Theology* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2001), 202. Hammond also argues, with respect to the *Itinerarium*, that Bonaventure’s “universal analogy” is in fact an affirmation of the univocity of God’s being throughout all creation, a presence which is at the same time God’s all-pervading love drawing all things potentially to union, *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>61</sup> “Dicitur autem transire figura huius mundi non quantum ad destructionem totalem huius mundi sensibilis sed quia per actionem illius ignis omnia elementaria inflammantis consummentur vegetabilia et animalia, purgabuntur et innovabuntur elementa, maxime aër et terra, purgabuntur iusti et adurentur reprobi; quibus factis, cessabit etiam motus caeli, ut sic, completo numero electorum, fiat quodam modo innovatio et praemiatio corporum mundanorum,” *Brev.* 7.4 (Quaracchi V.284).

renewal of heaven and earth through fire.<sup>62</sup> Bonaventure's account is described, like the Stoic doctrine of conflagration, as a balancing of elemental forces. At the beginning of humankind, a flood of water devoured and cleansed the earth, and so its contrary, fire, will devour and purify the earth at its end. Moreover, fire is the necessary antidote to the "cooling of charity" (*refrigerium caritatis*) that has befallen the world in its old age.

Since this cleansing is eternal, no creature could bring it about on its own, and thus a higher power must initiate the conflagration. Nevertheless, Bonaventure explains, the effect is produced by means of the natural powers of fire: "inflaming" (*inflammare*), "purging" (*purgare*), "rarefying" (*rarefacere*), and "subtilizing" (*subtiliare*). All things will be subject to this "concourse of fires"--the just will be purged by the fires of purgatory, the wicked tormented by the fires of hell, the elements refined and the animals and plants consumed by elemental fire. The heavenly bodies will burn with an intense brightness and come to rest. It may be tempting to parse here an analogy between the spiritual "fire" which purges the just and the real fire which refines and consumes the bodies of earth. However, Bonaventure explains with terrible clarity the nature of the fires of purgatory and hell. It must be held, he insists, that the fires of purgatory are a corporeal fire (*ignis corporalis*) which burn the spirit of the sins it carries and causes it to

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<sup>62</sup> See Cicero's discussion of in *De natura deorum* 2.118, Loeb Classical Library 19, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1967). Macrobius discusses this theory as well in his *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* 2.10, an major source for ancient natural philosophy for twelfth-century Latin theologians. On the influence of these theories in the thought of Origen, see Alan Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars: The History of an Idea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), esp. 115-17.

suffer.<sup>63</sup> Because the soul sinned by sinking to the body, it is fitting to divine justice that the punishments of purgatory come from the body and affect the soul. Thus the spirit is burned by a material fire (*ab igne materiali*) in purgatory. The fires of hell are also corporeal, Bonaventure writes, tormenting both the bodies and souls of the damned “in a corporeal place down below” (*in loco corporali deorsum*),<sup>64</sup> and the “smoke of their torments will ascend forever and ever.”<sup>65</sup>

These statements leave no refuge for the wicked in metaphor. For the just, however, the effect of corporeal fire on the spirit is, ultimately, good news. The soul is punished for its faults and “relieved of the burden of its guilt” (*reatuum onere alleviatam*), Bonaventure explains, either on the basis of some God-given power in the fire, or, more likely, through the interior working of grace with the external fires assisting. Bonaventure, then, sees the difficulty introduced by claiming that corporeal fire directly affects the incorporeal spirit--and yet he does not wish to deny that the corporeal fire itself, in whatever way effected by grace, has a role to play in the cleansing punishment. When the purgation is complete, immediately the purified spirits, “whom the fire of charity lifts up, and who have no impurity of the soul or any guilt to hold them back (*retardans*), necessarily fly away.”<sup>66</sup> The purification of the soul is, here again, understood as a contest of forces, the removal of a weight (*impuritas* or *onus reatum*)

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<sup>63</sup> *Brev.* 7.2 (Quaracchi V.282). Cf. Aelred of Rivaux’s discussion of corporeal fire in hell, which collects a number of late ancient authorities, in *Dialogue on the Soul* 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Brev.* 7.6 (Quaracchi V.287).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, citing Rev. 14.11.

<sup>66</sup> “...necesse est, illos spiritus evolare, in quibus est caritatis ignis sursum levans, et nihil retardans ex parte impuritatis animae vel reatus.” *Brev.* 7.2 (Quaracchi V.283).

which acted as a hindrance to another, greater weight (*caritas*). And this action occurs through (at least the assistance of) corporeal fire, which will envelop the earth and inflame, subtilize, and rarefy all things, that is, will transform all things into itself. Thus the conflagration of the earth appears to achieve the goal of the ordering weight of charity--all things are set in upward motion, bound together, and ultimately brought to rest.

The connection between the affective heat of the soul and the cleansing fire of the cosmos recalls the Stoic identification of the warm *pneuma* that produces changes in bodies with the “craftsmanlike fire” which creates and recreates the cosmos.<sup>67</sup> The resonance with the Stoic teaching stresses the deep continuity between the movement of souls and the movements of bodies. And just as, for the Stoic philosophers, this fire is both natural and divine, for Bonaventure, too, the affective movement of the all things to God is at the same natural and gratuitous.<sup>68</sup> But Bonaventure’s vision of the final conflagration is at the same time the devastating eschatological realization of Dionysius’s erotic cosmos: “We call love the unitive force.”

This love, as Bonaventure makes clear, has fully cosmic dimensions, and extends to every aspect of creation. Nevertheless, the rational soul, being immortal and possessed of the image of God in memory, intellect, and will, receives this love in a distinctive and

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<sup>67</sup> See, for example, the account of Diogenes Laërtius 7.156-57, trans. Brad Inwood and Lloyd P. Gerson in *The Stoics Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonials* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008), 57

<sup>68</sup> See Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.118, *Loeb Classical Library* 268, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, trans. H. Rackam (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933): “ita relinqui nihil praeter ignem, a quo rursum animante ac deo renovatio mundi fieret atque idem ornatus oreretur.”

greater mode than other creatures. Bonaventure affirms the Aristotelian distinction between the motion of the soul and the motion of bodies when he argues that, in all cases of corporeal motion, there must be distinguished an agent and patient of motion, but in the case of the will, true self-motion is possible. That is, the will is both the mover and moved, whereas in cases of bodily motion, there is an external agent (whether *place*, or some efficient cause) and the thing that is moved.<sup>69</sup>

Rather than obviating the force of Bonaventure's corporeal analogies for the ascent of the soul towards God, this distinction between self-motion and external motion makes the analogies all the more remarkable. For, though the deliberative motion of the soul is unlike the motion of bodies, the highest motion that human beings are capable of--the ascent toward and union with God--most closely resembles the most basic kind of motion in the universe--that of the elements moving toward their natural places.

Bonaventure is clear that the will is not subject to coercion: "Since attaining beatitude is not glorious unless it is through merit, and there is no merit in something unless it is done voluntarily and freely, it is fitting that freedom of choice [*libertatem arbitrii*] be given to the rational soul, through the removal of all coercion, for it is of the nature of the will that it in no way can be forced."<sup>70</sup> But while Bonaventure maintains that even the attainment of beatitude is not the result of any coercion of the will, he does, as we have seen, embrace the language of "necessity" in describing the ascent of purified souls to God by the fire of charity--that is, when the agent of motion in the soul is the weight of

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<sup>69</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 25, p. 1, art. un., q. 1, ad 4 (Quarracchi II.594). For further discussion of this argument, see Chapter 4.

<sup>70</sup> *Brev.* 2.9 (Quaracchi V.227).



charity, a gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit which troubles the basis of the distinction between spiritual motion and bodily motion. The deliberative motion of the will to any number of determinate ends is properly understood as self-motion, in which the agent of motion is the will itself (though this is without doubt dependent on grace in a general sense). When it is a matter of the infused grace of charity bearing the soul upwards, certainly the freedom of the will is not destroyed. Yet in this case the most fitting comparison for this motion, for Bonaventure, is the movement of the elementary bodies toward their natural places. The motion of grace in the soul is, like the inexorable motion of fire to its sphere, both a divine and a natural motion.

### Chapter 3: Hierarchy and Excess in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*

The following two chapters turn to examine how Bonaventure develops the theme of love as unifying fire not only as a vision for the consummation of creation but also as a medium and goal of Christian devotion in contemplation, prayer, and the practice of charity. In this chapter I examine the excessive order of creation and of the soul, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, Bonaventure's treatise on the stages of the soul's ascent modeled on the Seraph of Francis's vision at La Verna. In the next chapter, I examine the relation of the will's self-motion and the movement of affect in Bonaventure's *Life of St. Francis*, and the affective movement that the presentation of Francis's life effects in the reader. Together, I suggest, these two works in different ways lead the reader into a practice of devotion whose goal is the transformation of the affect, the ecstatic erasure of the boundary between nature and grace, interior and exterior, action and passion.

#### 1. On Mount La Verna

When Bonaventure wrote the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* in 1259, thirty-three years after Francis's death<sup>1</sup>--he had been the Franciscan minister general--a position he calls "the place of this most blessed father" Francis (*loco ipsius patris beatissimi*)--for two years.<sup>2</sup> In the crucial, curious prologue to the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure sets the scene in which he first received the impetus to write. Desiring peace according to the example of Francis and moved by a divine inclination, he writes, he retreated to La Verna seeking "a place of quiet" (*ad locum quietum*). He found there something more than quiet. For the place to which he withdrew is also the place (*in praedicto loco*) where Francis received the vision of the six-winged Seraph and was marked with the wounds of Christ's

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<sup>1</sup> The *Itinerarium* is one of a number of treatises dated to within a few years of Bonaventure's appointment as Minister General of the Franciscan order in 1257. In the case of the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure himself provides the date--if his dating can be taken literally, then the composition, or at least the conception, of the *Itinerarium* may be dated to September or October of 1259, around the anniversary of Francis's death on October 4, 1226. See the excellent recent analysis of evidence for Bonaventure's chronology in Jay M. Hammond, "Dating Bonaventure's Inception as Regent Master," *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009), 179-226. For a general (though in some cases disputed) chronology of Bonaventure's works, see Jacques Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1963), 171-82; also Joseph F. Quinn, "The Chronology of St. Bonaventure (1217-1257)," *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972), 168-86. Whether or not Bonaventure's own dating of the work is reliable, however, it would be a mistake to take it simply literally, given its multifaceted allegorical significance. The *Itinerarium* is, in a sense, an exegesis of Francis's seraphic vision at Mount La Verna and of the stigmata he received with that vision--the Christological significance, then, is underscored by the number thirty-three, which recalls the traditional age of Jesus at the time of his crucifixion. Furthermore, the wording, "circa Beati ipsius transitum," connects the death (*transitus*) of Francis with the "passing over" (also *transitus*) which is the goal and summit of the *itinerarium*. The dating, then, should be understood as part of the strategy of the prologue, discussed below, which frames the journey described in the treatise in a richly significant spiritual time and place, whatever else it might indicate about the historical circumstances of the writing.

<sup>2</sup> *Itinerarium* Pro. (36). Further in-text citations refer to the page numbers to the Boehner and Hayes edition.

crucifixion. Meditating on “some of the ways that the soul ascends to God,” Bonaventure begins to recall Francis’s vision. “In considering this, it appeared to me at once [*statim*] that this vision pointed not only to the uplifting of our father himself in contemplation, but also to the path by which it is reached” (36). A second vision thus occurs in the very place of the first. The exemplary nature of Francis’s vision--that is, the path it describes for the reader--appears to Bonaventure *statim*, “on the spot.”<sup>3</sup>

The insistence of the repeated motif of place (*locus*) in the prologue indicates something about the direction that the treatise will take. By locating the work at the peak of La Verna, Bonaventure frames the *Itinerarium* as a spiritual geography that describes at once 1) the ecstatic order of the cosmos as the unfolding of God’s being in likeness, image, and vestige, and 2) the order of the soul as a hierarchy of powers by which God is revealed and loved. The account of successive illuminations can be read, then, in light of this framing, as an account of how the soul is moved through this order. As Timothy Johnson writes, the *Itinerarium* offers “an invitation to an interior spatial pilgrimage of participative conversion and transformation, which is conceived, grounded, and embraced

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<sup>3</sup> As Steven Brown points out, the path that Francis’s vision suggests is not necessarily the path that Francis himself followed. The vision may be understood not as a prescription to be followed at all times, but a pedagogical tool or framework for explaining how ascent works. Brown, “Reflections on the Structural Sources of Bonaventure’s *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*,” in *Medieval Philosophy and Modern Times*, ed. Ghita Holmström-Hintikka (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 6.

in a engaging, dynamic relationship with the entire cosmos, visible and invisible, material and spiritual.”<sup>4</sup>

Medieval pilgrimage, however, was a precarious undertaking, presenting risks along the way and uncertainty at the destination. The interior pilgrimage is no different: the *Itinerarium* proceeds less as an ordered progression towards a goal than as a series of displacements, culminating not in a fixed destination that can be charted in advance, but in the soul’s *excessus* (exceeding) of itself and *ecstasis* (standing outside) of the intelligible in a transformation of the soul’s affective power.<sup>5</sup> The desire that draws the soul towards the summit through the interior and cosmic hierarchies ends by consuming the soul entirely in a final *transitus*--a passage, but also death--into God.<sup>6</sup> The nature of the journey’s goal should indicate something about the path that leads to it. Yet even scholars who have taken seriously the apophysis of knowledge described in the *Itinerarium*’s seventh chapter have often read it as a kind of coda to the spiritual

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<sup>4</sup> Timothy Johnson, “Prologue as Pilgrimage: Bonaventure as Spiritual Cartographer,” *Miscellanea Francescana* 106-107 (2006-2007), 445-64 at 446. Johnson also makes the case, based on evidence from Bonaventure’s sermons, that he wrote the *Itinerarium* after two months of traveling, and speculates that this travel experience helped to shape the pilgrimage motif of the work. For more on the literal and spiritual meanings of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages, see Leonard Bowman, “*Itinerarium*: The Shape of the Metaphor,” in *Itinerarium: The Idea of a Journey*, ed. Leonard Bowman (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1983), 3-33.

<sup>5</sup> On *ecstasis* and the related term *raptus* in Bonaventure’s writings, see Karl Rahner, “Der Begriff der ecstasis bei Bonaventura,” *Zeitschrift für Ascese und Mystik* 9 (1934), 1-18, and J. Beumer, “Zwei schwierige Begriffe in der mystischen Theologie Bonaventuras ('raptus' und 'ecstasis'),” in *Franziskanische Studien* 56 (1974), 249-62.

<sup>6</sup> On Bonaventure’s conception of *transitus* see Werner Hülsbusch, “Die Theologie des Transitus bei Bonaventura,” *S. Bonaventura* 1274-1974, 4:533-65 and André Ménard, “Spiritualité du Transitus,” *ibid.*, 4:607-35.

progression of the first six chapters, rather than as an interpretive key to the whole.<sup>7</sup> The goal of this chapter is primarily, then, to consider the structure of the entire work in light of the transformation of the *affectus* described in the seventh chapter. This means re-evaluating Bonaventure's understanding of hierarchy--both the hierarchy of the soul's powers and the cosmic hierarchy of vestige, image, and likeness--in light of the affective excess to which it leads.

## 2. *The stages of ascent and the powers of the soul*

In the prologue to the text, Bonaventure locates the starting point of the journey (*itinerarium*) in the "groans of prayer," by which desire is enkindled in the soul (38). Then again at the beginning of Chapter One, he states that "prayer is the mother and the origin of upward movement [*sursum-actionis*]" (44). Here he explains, citing Dionysius's *Mystical Theology*, that ascent must start with prayer because the ascent of the soul is a matter of the soul exceeding itself, rising above itself, "not by a bodily ascent, but by an ascent of the heart." Yet the soul cannot exceed itself *by itself*. "We cannot be elevated above ourselves unless a superior power lifts us up. No matter how our interior stages may be ordered, nothing will happen if divine aid does not help us. But divine aid comes to those who pray from their heart humbly and devoutly" (44). Ascent begins in affective

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Gregory LaNave, "Knowing God through and in All Things: A Proposal for Reading Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*," *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009), 267-299, and Jay Hammond's "Respondeo" to LaNave's essay (Ibid.), 301-321. Hammond rightly asks of LaNave's reading, "How can one accurately understand a text if its introduction and conclusion are ignored?" Yet apart from considering Bonaventure's summary of the work at the beginning of Chapter 7, Hammond's own response focuses on the prologue and the first six chapters.

prayer not as the soul's first act, but as the initial giving over of oneself to the divine agency that enables the soul's movement. Moreover, the fact that ascent cannot occur at all without divine aid (since ascent entails self-surpassing) means that *ecstasis*, the state of the soul as above or outside itself, is not reserved for the final stage of the *itinerarium*. That is, Bonaventure does not present a series of steps that the soul takes to bring itself to order, at the end of which that order is exceeded. Rather, the entire journey into God is an *ecstasis*, or, better, a series of them. If the six wings of the seraph entail an ordering of the soul's illuminations from vestige to image, and from image to likeness, Bonaventure is emphatic from the beginning that the entire seraphic order is set on fire and affixed to the cross.

As Jay Hammond argues, the goal of the *Itinerarium* is peace, understood as "right order,"<sup>8</sup> and it is clear that this is an ecstatic order from beginning to end, an order of movements. The threefold ordering scheme (which Bonaventure then doubles to arrive at six stages) is presented not as a three-step, vertically oriented ladder, but as a movement from without, to within, to above or beyond. The order described and traversed in the *Itinerarium* is oriented around the human soul. And since it is the soul

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<sup>8</sup> Jay Hammond, "An Historical Analysis of the Concept of Peace in Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1998), 21. Hammond seeks to place the *Itinerarium*, and specifically its call for peace, in the historical context of the rifts developing in the Franciscan order during Bonaventure's first years as Minister General. Thus "order" resonates as both a political and theological ideal. For more on the notion of *ordo* in the *Itinerarium* see Hammond's essay, "Order in the *Itinerarium*" in J.A. Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, trans. and ed. Jay M. Hammond (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2001).

(*mens*)<sup>9</sup> itself that is the wayfarer on this journey, the movement is ecstatic in each of its stages.<sup>10</sup> The soul is never simply “in itself”--even (and perhaps especially) its turn inward is ecstatic, since even in the inward movement of the journey one discovers the image of God and is thus taken beyond oneself. Outside itself, the wayfaring soul moves through the *vestigia* of God, within itself as an *imago* of God, and finally beyond itself, to the eternal and *spiritualissimum*.

This threefold distinction, Bonaventure explains, is not at all fortuitous, as is attested to by a number of corresponding triads: the threefold existence of things in matter, in *intelligentia*, and in the eternal art; the corporeal, spiritual, and divine substance of Christ, “who is our ladder”; and the mind’s threefold ways of seeing (*aspectus*). The mind sees, according to Bonaventure, in three ways: *sensualitas*, which sees external,

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<sup>9</sup> The crucial term *mens* is not adequately translated either by “soul” or “mind”--at times Bonaventure clearly means by *mens* the higher part of the soul--the memory, understanding, and will by which the soul is the image of God (throughout Chapter 3, for example). Yet Bonaventure is also clear that the soul as a unity is the subject of ascent, and not simply the higher mind alone--see, for example, *Itin.* 1.6: “Corresponding to the six stages of ascent to God are six grades of powers of the soul (*sex gradus potentiarum animae*) through which we ascend...” (48). And while Bonaventure does at times recognize some distinction between *mens* and *anima*, it is clear (from the seventh chapter, as discussed below) that he does not mean by “mind” the “superior reason” or higher intellect. Thus, in order to avoid overemphasizing the cognitive aspects of ascent, and to signify that Bonaventure’s subject is the entire soul, I have generally followed recent scholarly convention in translating *mens* as “soul,” except where context suggests that the term refers restrictively to the higher powers or the triad of memory, understanding, and will.

<sup>10</sup> Denys Turner insists rightly that Bonaventure’s notion of hierarchy is one in which each step contains within it all of the previous stages. However, as I will argue below, what makes Bonaventure’s “hierarchy” truly dynamic is the way in which each stage also contains its superior stage. See Turner, “Hierarchy Interiorised: Bonaventure’s *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*” in *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 102-34.



corporeal things; *spiritus*, in which the mind sees itself; and *mens*, in which the mind looks above itself (48).

Bonaventure arrives at six stages by doubling these triads, so that each of the three stages can be understood as both a beginning and end (or creation and consummation), as both a means *through* which God is contemplated and as a mirror *in* which God is contemplated, or as both mixed with other things and as pure and unmixed.<sup>11</sup> The significance of the number six is corroborated in several ways: the six days of creation; the six steps to Solomon's throne; and, of course, the six wings of the Seraph. More concretely, the six stages of ascent correspond to six grades of powers within the soul by which it ascends: *sensus*, *imaginatio*, *ratio*, *intellectus*, *intelligentia*, and *apex mentis* or *synderesis scintilla* (50).

### 3. *Speculation on the soul in twelfth- and thirteenth-century theology*

The schematic force of Bonaventure's doubled triads can make the sixfold enumeration (*senarium*) of powers appear inevitable. Modern theologians and historians have frequently praised Bonaventure's vivid style as proceeding through the elaboration

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<sup>11</sup> For an analysis of the structure of the *Itinerarium* in terms of this "through" and "in" dialectic, see Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*"; LaNave, "Knowing God"; and Hammond, "Respondeo."

of symbols and resemblances rather than through logical or argumentative analysis<sup>12</sup> (recapitulating the voluminously debated question of whether Bonaventure was more of an “Augustinian” than an “Aristotelian”).<sup>13</sup> But such a disjunction between symbolism and argument, if it is ever tenable, is not at all appropriate to the theological masters of the thirteenth century. The often dazzling complexity of the schemes that unfold in Bonaventure’s texts themselves constitute an argument for the truth of those schemes--as the texts reveal, turn by turn, different angles of a single model in order to demonstrate its

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<sup>12</sup> For example, Wayne Hellmann contrasts Bonaventure’s “Augustinian” style of “unfolding intuitions” with logical argumentation, applying to Bonaventure the verdict of Léon Veuthey, who was describing the “Augustinian approach” to theology (Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 1). In the preface to his *Psychology of Love According to St. Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, NY and Louvain: Franciscan Institute and E. Nauwelaerts, 1951), Robert Prentice pays a similar qualified compliment to Bonaventure’s style: “There is no doubt that Bonaventure is not the profoundest of scholastics, at least in so far as can be ascertained from the writings which he has left. But there is likewise no doubt that he is the most artistic of them. None of the well-known scholastics can match him for imagery or charm of style; nor can any of them reach his poetical insight” (xi).

<sup>13</sup> On the history of the “Augustinian vs. Aristotelian” debate as it pertains to Bonaventure, see Charles Foshee, “St. Bonaventure and the Augustinian Concept of *Mens*,” *Franciscan Studies* 27 (1967), 163-75. Foshee argues that Bonaventure’s use of the term *mens* locates him more in the Augustinian than the Aristotelian intellectual world. The Augustinian-Aristotelian antinomy dovetails with another, that of “philosophy” and “theology,” in Bonaventure’s writings. Most influential in correlating these two axes was Fernand Van Steenberghen’s discussion of Bonaventure’s philosophy in *Aristotle in the West: The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism*, trans. Leonard Johnston (New York: Humanities Press 1955). Van Steenberghen argues that a philosophical “system” can be derived from Bonaventure’s thought only by “mutilating” its theological elements, as he accuses Gilson of doing (160). But, he argues, Bonaventure’s philosophical ideas are firmly rooted in the Aristotelian tradition, even while as a theologian he belongs to the “Augustinian trend in theology” (162). Foshee comes to a similar conclusion when he maintains that the *Itinerarium* is “typically Augustinian in that it is not philosophical but devotional in orientation” (170). By this he means that Bonaventure gives primacy to the Good over the True and willing over knowing. The most comprehensive discussion of the question of Bonaventure’s philosophy is J. F. Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure’s Philosophy* (Toronto : Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973).

coherence and the proper belonging of each part to the whole. The demonstration of the “fittingness” of a set of ideas is not an alternative to scholastic argumentation, but is rather a major feature of scholastic and prescholastic theology (compare, for example, the arguments in Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo*).<sup>14</sup> Presented as a complex and unified whole, the argument appears synoptic, synchronous, and synthetic, and the discursive process and evolution of its ideas is obscured. But the ideas presented in the *Itinerarium* do have a history, a history of theological experimentation visible within and across a number of twelfth and thirteenth century texts. In the case of the powers of the soul presented in the *Itinerarium*, a look at Bonaventure’s sources and the work of his contemporaries show that his list of six represents a distinct theological decision, one whose ramifications will be explored further below. As J. A. Hellmann has shown, the use of the six wings of the Seraph as a pedagogical device is found already in Thomas of Celano’s first *vita* of Francis.<sup>15</sup> And as Steven Brown argues persuasively, the closest structural analogue to the

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<sup>14</sup> Anselm, *Cur Deus homo* 1.3-4, et passim, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 2, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Publishers, 1946), 39-133 at 51. Fittingness (*convenientia*) is most fundamentally for Bonaventure an ontological category in which two or more beings are related either by participation in a common reality, or conformed to one another as exemplar and imitation. See *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi* 2, ad 2; and *I Sent.* See also John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock’s discussion of *analogia* in Aquinas as a kind of midpoint between arbitrariness and strict logical necessity, in *Truth in Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 60-65. On “fittingness” (*convenientia*), see Gilbert Narcisse, *Les raisons de Dieu: Arguments de convenance et esthétique théologique selon St. Thomas d’Aquin et Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1997); Michel Corbin, *L’inoui de Dieu: Six Etudes Christologiques* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1979), 109-59; Emma Jane Marie Spago, *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1953), 72-87. See also the expert analysis of *analogia* in Bonaventure’s writings in Philip Reynolds, “Analogy of Divine Names in Bonaventure,” *Mediaeval Studies* 65 (2003), 117-62.

<sup>15</sup> “The Seraph in Thomas of Celano’s *Vita Prima*.”

*Itinerarium*'s six stages of contemplation is Richard of St. Victor's *Benjamin Major*, which traces the ascending contemplations through the activities of the soul's powers. But though Richard and Bonaventure both describe six stages of contemplation by which the soul advances to God, the nature of each of those stages is understood very differently by the two authors. Both the *Benjamin Major* and the *Itinerarium* are heirs to the same tradition of theological speculation on the soul, but they interpret the significance of the hierarchy of powers differently.<sup>16</sup>

In both monastic and scholastic contexts, much theological activity in the twelfth century was devoted to enumerating and describing the powers by which the soul attains knowledge and wisdom. The Cistercian authors William of St.-Thierry and Aelred of Rivaux were content with four: *sensus*, *ratio*, *imaginatio*, and *intelligentia*. Hugh of St. Victor frequently uses this classification too, although in his treatise on the arts and scriptural interpretation, the *Didascalicon*, Hugh adds a fifth--*intellectus*. This fivefold scheme was common in the later twelfth century--as it is found, for example, in one of Bonaventure's most frequently cited twelfth-century sources, *De spiritu et anima*. *De spiritu* circulated under the authority of Augustine, though already in the thirteenth

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<sup>16</sup> Brown, "Reflections on the Structural Sources." On Richard of St. Victor's stages of contemplation in comparison with those of the thirteenth-century Victorine Thomas Gallus, see Robert Javelet, "Thomas Gallus et Richard de Saint-Victor mystiques," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 29 (1962), 206-233.

century its antiquity was questioned, and some posited a Cistercian author.<sup>17</sup> Whoever compiled the treatise, it bears comparison to the many Cistercian treatises devoted to the soul in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and in fact at many points reproduces them. In a near-verbatim citation of Isaac of Stella's *Epistola de anima*,<sup>18</sup> the author of *De spiritu et anima* lists five powers of knowledge by which the soul advances toward wisdom: *sensus, imaginatio, ratio, intellectus*, and *intelligentia*. These powers correspond to the five divisions of the sensible world: earth, water, air, ether or firmament, and the empyrean heaven. In addition, the wayfaring soul advances toward charity with four powers of desire: joy, hope, pain, and fear. Together these make nine powers, which Isaac of Stella suggests could be correlated to the nine celestial orders in the Dionysian hierarchy.<sup>19</sup> The author of *De spiritu et anima* follows up on that suggestion, identifying each of the nine powers with one of the ranks of angels. The four desirous powers are grouped neither at the top nor the bottom of the hierarchy, but are mixed among the

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<sup>17</sup> Bonaventure accepts its Augustinian authority, though he is aware of the doubts. In 2 *Sent.* d. 18, a. 2, q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.450), Bonaventure cites "verba etiam Augustini in libro de Anima et spiritu." Elsewhere in the same work, after citing "Augustine, in *On the spirit and the soul*," he adds, "And if you say that this book is not Augustine's, the point stands, since he says the same thing in *On the Trinity*" (2 *Sent.* d. 24, p. 1, a. 2, q. 1, concl. [Quaracchi II.560]). Thomas Aquinas suggests that the treatise may be the more recent work of a Cistercian, and that its authority depends on its authorship: "Some deny that this book is Augustine's: for it is ascribed to a Cistercian who compiled it from Augustine's works and added things of his own. Hence we are not to take what is written there as having authority. If, however, its authority should be maintained..." *STh* IIIa, Q70, A2, ad 1. Cf. *Disputed Questions on the Soul*, A12, ad 1.

<sup>18</sup> PL 194:1875-1890. English translation in McGinn, *Three Treatises on Man*, 155-77. On Isaac of Stella in the context of twelfth- and thirteenth-century speculation on the soul, see McGinn, *The Golden Chain: A Study in the Theological Anthropology of Isaac of Stella* (Washington: Cistercian Publications, 1972).

<sup>19</sup> *Ep. an.* 8 (McGinn, *Three Treatises on Man*, 162).

powers of knowledge. The order from lowest to highest is as follows: sense (messengers), imagination (archangels), fear (virtues), pain (powers), reason (principalities), joy (dominations), intellect (thrones), understanding (cherubim), and hope (seraphim).<sup>20</sup> This suggests an image of ascent in which the soul moves back and forth between its powers of knowledge and powers of desire as it progresses closer to God. Finally, it advances to the fire of charity through hope (and hope, the author explains, is the desire for and love of God).

For Isaac of Stella and the author of *De spiritu*, the nine powers by which the soul advances to wisdom and charity are contained within a more basic classification. As Isaac writes, “The total essence of the soul is fully and perfectly contained in these three: reasonableness (*rationabilitas*), concupiscibility (*concupiscibilitas*) and irascibility (*irascibilitas*).”<sup>21</sup> Yet later Isaac appears to reduce even this classification to a twofold division, when he writes that “the natural power of knowledge, knowing all things and discerning among them, and the natural power of desire by which, in their order and degree, it loves all things, are in the soul and are what the soul is.”<sup>22</sup> Bonaventure was fully aware of these classifications, through *De spiritu* if not directly from Isaac’s *Letter*. In any event, Isaac’s reduction of the powers of the soul to knowing and loving anticipates the thirteenth-century distinction (emphasized by Bonaventure in his *Sentences* commentary) between the cognitive and affective aspects of the soul.

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<sup>20</sup> *De spiritu* 5 (McGinn, *Three Treatises on Man*, 185-87).

<sup>21</sup> *Ep. an.* 5 (McGinn, *Three Treatises on Man*, 159).

<sup>22</sup> *Ep. an.* 21 (McGinn, *Three Treatises on Man*, 175, translation modified).

Bonaventure affirms the threefold division of the soul's powers into rationality, concupiscibility, and irascibility. Discussing conscience and synderesis in his *Sentences* commentary, he clarifies that the affective power of synderesis is a type of motion (*modus movendi*) of all or any of these three capacities rather than a distinct power.<sup>23</sup> When the rational, concupiscible, or irascible power moves infallibly, soaring above all other powers toward the supreme good, that is synderesis.

#### 4. *Desire among the powers of the soul in the Itinerarium*

In the *Itinerarium*, the triad of rationality, concupiscence, and irascibility does not appear by name, nor does the distinction between the cognitive and affective aspects of the soul. Yet the two basic capacities of knowledge and love--intellect and affect--are at play in the text and in the ascent it describes. In the first chapter, in a passage that echoes the imagery of the proemium of the second book of his *Sentences* commentary,

Bonaventure writes that

God placed [the first] human beings in a paradise of delights. But turning away from the true light to changeable good, they were bent over (*incurvatus*) through their own sin, which infected human nature in two ways: with ignorance of mind and concupiscence of flesh. Thus human beings, blind (*excaecatus*) and bent over (*incurvatus*), sit in darkness and do not see the light of heaven without the aid of grace together with righteousness (*iustitia*) to oppose concupiscence, and without the aid of knowledge (*scientia*) together with wisdom (*sapientia*) to oppose ignorance (50).

This turning away from God resulted in a twofold loss of rectitude--the ability to know rightly and to desire rightly. But justice, knowledge, and wisdom rectify the soul through the hierarchical operations of purging, developing, and perfecting.

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<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

In the third chapter, Bonaventure turns to the image of God in the natural powers of the soul. Here the twofold distinction of knowledge and love is expanded to the Augustinian triad of memory, understanding, and will (*memoria, intelligentia, voluntas*).<sup>24</sup> Since the subject at hand remains the ascent of the soul, Bonaventure explains these powers in terms of their ability to lead the soul back through itself to the eternal Art, the supreme Truth, and the highest Good. Memory holds all things in the soul--past, present, and future; it is not only a depository of things derived from sense, but also a kind of “inner reason” (quoting Augustine) which is able to assent immediately to the first principles of the sciences, “as though it recognizes them as innate and familiar.”<sup>25</sup> The intellective power (*virtus intellectiva*)--Bonaventure’s precise term here for Augustinian *intelligentia*--is the ability to understand terms, propositions, and inferences, and Bonaventure describes this power as the process of reducing specific definitions and propositions to more general ones until the intellect arrives at the exemplars of knowable things in the eternal Art. The third power--what Bonaventure calls the “elective power” (*virtus electiva*)--involves three aspects: *consilium, iudicium*, and *desiderium* (88).

The first of these, *consilium* (commonly translated “deliberation”) is the determination of better and worse, which, Bonaventure explains, is in fact a determination about a thing’s proximity to what is best, and requires some notion of a

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<sup>24</sup> Augustine discusses this triad as the image of God in *mens* at length in *De Trinitate* Book 10, in a reflection on the Delphic oracle and Ciceronian injunction, “nosce te” (know thyself).

<sup>25</sup> “tanquam sibi innata et familiaria recognoscat,” *Itinerarium*, 82.



highest good (*summum bonum*). *Iudicium* (judgment) makes a determination about the rightness of something with respect to some higher law. When the soul judges itself, it requires some law higher than itself, and thus depends on a divine law for its operation. The first two aspects of the elective power, then, involve both deliberation and a notion of the highest good. The third aspect, desire (*desiderium*), recalls Bonaventure's discussion of the natural will in the *Sentences* commentary:<sup>26</sup> "Desire is principally concerned with that which moves it the most. And that which moves it the most is that which is loved the most. And that which is loved the most is to be happy. But happiness is attained only by reaching the best and ultimate end. Therefore, human desire wants nothing but the supreme Good, or that which leads to it or in some way reflects that Good."<sup>27</sup> Desire is that which is always moved by and to the *summum bonum*--much like synderesis as described in the *Sentences* commentary. As Bougerol explains, *desiderium* for Bonaventure is "more than a force or impulsion--it is a tendency," which does not require cognitively certain judgment regarding the object, but rather only that the soul "taste the

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<sup>26</sup> See Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

<sup>27</sup> "Desiderium autem principaliter est illius quod maxime ipsum movet. Maxime autem movet quod maxime amatur; maxime autem amatur esse beatum; beatum autem esse non habetur nisi per optimum et finem ultimum: nihil igitur appetit humanum desiderium nisi quia summum bonum, vel quia est ad illud, vel quia habet aliquam effigiem illius," *Itinerarium*, 88.

power, the beauty, and the fruit of the attraction.”<sup>28</sup> The first chapter of the *Itinerarium* also suggests that that *desiderium* and synderesis are, if not strictly synonymous, nevertheless related in that both describe the soul’s constant relation to the highest Good. When Bonaventure lists the six levels of powers that correspond to the six illuminations, he identifies the sixth power as “the spark of synderesis or the apex of the mind” (*synderesis scintilla seu apex mentis*), corresponding to the sixth speculation on the Triune God as the highest Good (50).

Except for this list of six powers, however, the *Itinerarium* is less concerned than other texts in exhaustively enumerating the soul’s powers.<sup>29</sup> Chapters 3 and 4, while they discuss the workings of the soul, are more concerned with the ways that the operations of the soul reflect its creator than with the nature of the instruments by which these operations are performed. Even the triad of rationality, concupiscence, and irascibility does not appear. With the exception of one biblical quotation, every mention of *concupiscentia* is negative, denoting disordered carnal appetites. To the vice of concupiscence, *desiderium* stands as a kind of counterpart or remedy--as when (in the fourth chapter) Bonaventure laments how rarely the soul turns back into itself, since “it is

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<sup>28</sup> J. Bougerol, “L’aspect original de l’*Itinerarium mentis in Deum* et son influence sur la spiritualité de son temps,” *Antonianum* 52 (1977), 311. See *Comm. in Eccl. 7* (Quaracchi IV.54): “When something is desired, it is not necessary that a certain cognition precede it. For desire follows estimation alone” (*Quod aliquid desideratur, non necesse est, quod praecedat cognitio certitudinis; desiderium enim sequitur solam aestimationem*). Bonaventure makes a similar claim for *dilectio* in 2 Sent. d. 23, a. 2, q. 3, ad. 4 (Quaracchi II.545-46), in response to the objection that, if Adam loved God in Paradise, he must have had a preceding vision of God. Refuting this argument, Bonaventure cites William of St. Thierry (misidentified as Bernard of Clairvaux) that *dilectio* “extends itself further than vision,” since “*dilectio* sometimes follows estimation alone.”

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, the detailed discussions of the powers in the *Breviloquium*.

drawn away by disordered concupiscence, and therefore does not return to itself through the desire for internal sweetness and spiritual joy.”<sup>30</sup> In fact, many times throughout the text, Bonaventure names desire as the initiator and vehicle of ascent. In the prologue, for example, he writes that “no one is disposed at all for divine contemplations which lead to mental ecstasies without being, like Daniel, a man of desires (*vir desideriorum*)” (38). And in the final chapter, Bonaventure explains that the mystery of the *excessus mentis* can be revealed only to those who desire it, “and no one desires it but one who is inflamed to the marrow with the fire of the Holy Spirit whom Christ has sent into the world” (136). But as Bonaventure argues in Chapter 3, desire, as an activity or aspect of the “elective power” of the soul, is always desire for the final end. Unlike *concupiscentia*, *desiderium* is moved in only one direction, and toward a goal that lies well beyond its own powers. Bonaventure’s discussion of the soul’s powers, then, serves less to highlight the role they play in ascent than to chart more precisely how human beings are created to receive a grace that exceeds them.

##### 5. Hierarchization and the three mentales excessus of the Song of Songs

It is not only human beings who are so created. The cosmic hierarchy also has an essentially ecstatic structure. And the fourth stage of ascent--the transformation of the *imago* of God in the mind’s powers to the *similitudo* of God in the hierarchized soul--depends on this structure. In the fourth stage, Bonaventure writes, the soul is like someone fallen who lies waiting for the help of another to get up again. In the soul’s case,

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<sup>30</sup> “concupiscentiis illecta, ad se ipsam nequaquam revertitur per desiderium suavitatis internae et laetitiae spiritualis,” *Itinerarium*, 96.

this help comes from the three theological virtues--faith, hope, and love. Bonaventure details the several effects of the clothing of the virtues on the image of the soul. Most significantly, the virtues purify, illumine, and perfect the soul--that is, they make the soul hierarchical according to Dionysius's triple operation. The remainder of the chapter describes this threefold operation. The soul's becoming hierarchical involves the awakening of the five spiritual senses and three ecstasies. Invoking the *Song of Songs*, Bonaventure argues that this awakening is brought about by the lover's desire for her beloved. Here the interlocking analogies make clear that "becoming hierarchical" is both inward and ecstatic, experiential and affective.

The spiritual senses have everything to do with the soul's love for Christ since, as Bonaventure explains, they are capacities for receiving and experiencing Christ the beloved. By faith, the soul recovers the spiritual senses of sight and hearing by which the soul perceives the light and the words of Christ. Hope enkindles the soul's sense of smell (which, according to the analogy, is linked to the capacity of breath) as it yearns to be filled with the inspired Word. In love the soul embraces the Bridegroom and, "receiving delight from him and passing over [*transiens*] to him in ecstatic love [*ecstaticum amorem*], it recovers its taste and touch" (100). In the hierarchy of the corporeal senses common to the thirteenth-century schools, taste and touch are the basest of the senses, the perceptual modes in which bodies (of the perceiver and the perceived) are most implicated. As Bonaventure explains earlier in the *Itinerarium*, what is sublime and luminous enters through sight, and what is solid and earthly enters through touch (64).

Yet here, in describing the spiritual senses, taste and touch are the very senses that love awakens.<sup>31</sup>

Why would something as exalted as the soul's love for the Bridegroom be described through the mode of these most bodily and earthly senses? The embrace of the Bridegroom is above all a matter of taste and touch, since these senses involve the closest contact (a contact that can only be conceived, even if analogically, as corporeal) between perceiver and perceived.<sup>32</sup> Thomas Gallus makes a similar point in his Commentary on the *Song* when he writes that the external senses are "models of love because love meets its objects by touching, smelling, and tasting."<sup>33</sup> Yet the spiritual senses of taste and touch may signify more than just intimacy for Bonaventure here.<sup>34</sup> Thomas Aquinas explains in the *Summa Theologiae* that touch and taste (the latter being a species of the former) are the most material senses insofar as they are modes in which the body is affected naturally by the object according to its proper quality.<sup>35</sup> For example, a hand becomes hot by touching a hot object. In this way, then, the bodily senses of touch and taste are modes in which external objects act upon the perceiver naturally and materially, that is, they are

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Brev. 5.6 (Quaracchi V.259)

<sup>32</sup> This point is also made clearly by Thomas Aquinas. See *STh* I.78.3.

<sup>33</sup> Trans. in Denys Turner, *Eros and Allegory: Medieval Exegesis of the Song of Songs* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications), 326.

<sup>34</sup> For a more thorough account of Bonaventure's teachings on the spiritual senses, see Karl Rahner, "The Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses in the Middle Ages," in *Theological Investigations* vol. 16, trans. Cornelius Ernst (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), 109-28; and Gregory LaNave, "Bonaventure," ch. 9 of *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity*, ed. Paul Gavrilyuk and Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 159-73.

<sup>35</sup> *STh* I.78.3.

modes of natural affect.<sup>36</sup> In the embrace of the Lover and the Bridegroom, touch is not only the most intimate apprehension of the soul's object, but the most vulnerable opening of the soul to being affected by and transformed into her Beloved.

With its spiritual senses restored, and the soul able to feel her Beloved, she now assumes the voice of the Solomonic lover. In fact, Bonaventure says, the *Song of Songs* was written for and about this fourth level of ascent, which “no one grasps [*capit*] except one who receives it, for it is more a matter of affective experience [*experientia affectuali*] than of rational consideration” (100). It is at this stage that the soul becomes prepared for three spiritual ecstasies [*mentales excessus*], as performed in the *Song*. The awakening of the spiritual senses leads directly to these ecstasies, in that the fivefold spiritual sensory experience of Christ causes the soul to overflow itself in three ways: through devotion, admiration, and exultation. Bonaventure describes these three ecstasies with the language of the *Song*. In the first ecstasy, the soul is filled with an abundance of devotion, so that it becomes like “a pillar of smoke with the aromas of myrrh and frankincense” (100). In the second, the soul is filled to overflowing with admiration, through which the soul becomes like “the dawn, the moon, and the sun.” These three lights correspond to the three illuminations that lift the soul in wonder at the Bridegroom. The third ecstasy occurs

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<sup>36</sup> Thomas notes, however, that in sensible creatures the effect an object has on the perceiver is never merely natural. That is, it is never entirely without an intellectual response; otherwise the sense of touch would have to be extended to even inanimate objects, which too are naturally affected by external agents. John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock point out that for Thomas, touch is the basest of the senses both in being the most bodily and the most extensive, and that all sense perception is based on or understood on the model of touch. In fact, they understand touch for Thomas as not only not opposed to intellect, but also as the mode (or model?) of intelligence, both human and divine. See Milbank and Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas*, 71).

through an overabundance of joy or exultation. In this ecstasy the soul is “filled with delight” and “leans [*innixa*] completely on her Beloved” (100).

The description of these three ecstasies echo Richard’s much lengthier discussion of the three alienations of the mind in the *Benjamin Major*--through greatness of devotion, greatness of admiration, and greatness of joy, each of which is described by the same passages of the *Song* that Bonaventure cites here.<sup>37</sup> However, here as so often in the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure does not borrow without casting his material in a very different light. Richard’s text describes three different ways that the mind is lifted above itself and acknowledges that the mind is raised in different ways in different people. “For in order that the author of all goods might commend the gifts of His grace in us, He shows diverse effects from the same thing at diverse times and in diverse persons.”<sup>38</sup> Even if Richard suggests at times that the third alienation is higher (or at least more dependent on divine grace) than the others, there is still no sense that the three alienations form an ordered progression of a single soul. Bonaventure, by contrast, describes the three ecstasies as a kind of triple operation, analogous to the other threefold transformations that occur at this stage: the infusion of three theological virtues, the opening of the three senses of scriptural meaning, and, the triad discussed most extensively, the three “hierarchizing”

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<sup>37</sup> The same triad appears in Bonaventure’s *De perfectione vitae ad sorores* 5.6-9. On contemplation and the overthrow of reason in the *Benjamin Maior*, see Stephen Jaeger, “Richard of St. Victor and the Medieval Sublime,” in *Magnificence and the Sublime in Medieval Aesthetics: Art, Architecture, Literature, Music* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

<sup>38</sup> Richard of St. Victor, *Benjamin Major* 5.11; trans. Grover A. Zinn as *The Mystical Ark*, in *Richard of St. Victor*, Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1979), 325.

operations of the virtues: purification, illumination, and perfection.<sup>39</sup> Purification corresponds to the ecstasy of devotion, as indicated by the purifying “pillar of smoke.” Illumination occurs in the overflowing of wonder, by which the soul becomes like “the dawn, the moon, and the sun.” And the ecstasy of joy perfects the soul’s delight in Christ, so that she “leans totally on her beloved.” In a real sense, then, the ecstasies of the soul are what make the soul hierarchical. “With these [ecstasies] accomplished, our spirit is made hierarchical in order to ascend on high in accordance with that heavenly Jerusalem. No one enters that city unless, through grace, that city has first descended into the heart, as John sees in his *Apocalypse*” (100).

This becoming-hierarchical of the soul is at the same time the reformation of the image into a similitude of God. The opening of Chapter 4 makes this connection through an allusion to the parable of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10, by way of Bonaventure’s own commentary on this passage. In his Commentary on Luke, Bonaventure interprets the human race as the man who

went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, that is to say, from paradise into the world, and fell among robbers; namely, into the power of demons who robbed him of the gifts of grace and wounded him in his natural powers. They left him half-dead in that after the similitude had been taken away only the image remained.... That image, nevertheless, was despoiled because of a turning away and wounded because of a turning around.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> On Bonaventure’s notion of hierarchy see J. Bougerol, “Le perfection chrétienne et la structuration des trois voies,” *Etudes Franciscaines* 19 (1969), 397-409.

<sup>40</sup> *Comm. in Luc.* 10.62 (Quaracchi VII:271). Cited in Timothy Johnson, *The Soul in Ascent: Bonaventure on Poverty, Prayer, and Union with God* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 2000), 18.



This is the soul at the beginning of the fourth stage. Like the wounded man, the soul lies waiting on external help to lift it up. In the fourth contemplation, the soul receives faith, hope, and charity from above. These virtues awaken the spiritual senses, through which the soul receives such delights that it overflows itself, lifting it up to the heavenly place which has already established itself in the soul.

More precisely, the soul is established as a heavenly place through the reformation of the *imago*. “The image of our mind therefore should be clothed with the three theological virtues by which the soul is purified, illumined, and perfected. In this way the image is reformed and made to conform with the heavenly Jerusalem and is made a part of the church militant which is the offspring of the heavenly Jerusalem, according to the apostle” (99). Note that in Chapter 3, Bonaventure recalled the Augustinian triad of memory, intellect, and will, which is the created image *through which* the soul contemplates the Trinity. Now here, at the fourth stage, the soul, reformed by faith, hope, and charity, is made into an *imago* of the whole heavenly retinue *in which* God dwells and is contemplated. By the lover’s ecstasy the soul is stretched to encompass the heavens, and thus to become “a house of God,” a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (106).

#### 6. *Hierarchy and ascent: Vestige, image, and likeness*

The “hierarchization” of the soul<sup>41</sup> is thus both a *gradus* of ascent and a radicalization or a reversal of ascent’s logic--for the journey of the soul into God shows itself to be the movement of God (and of the cosmic hierarchy) into the soul. This reversal, however, is consistent with the character of incarnational grace. Christ descends in order that the soul might ascend. The movement underscores the passivity of the soul in its own reformation and the role of grace--specifically, the grace of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, through which the soul becomes a dwelling place for the Spirit. The connection between the dwelling place of God and the theological virtues recalls a triad of distinctions that appears throughout Bonaventure’s earlier writings as *magister*, though not with complete consistency. Vestige (or trace), image, and likeness (or similitude) name three grades or aspects by which creatures represent God. The second book of the *Breviloquium* contains the most extended account of this triad:

The created world is like a book in which its maker, the Trinity, is reflected, represented, and read according to a three grades of expression, namely, through the modes of vestige, image, and likeness. The aspect of vestige is found in all creatures, that of the image is found only in intellectual or rational spirits, and the aspect of the likeness is only found in those which are conformed to God (*deiformibus*). The human intellect is created to ascend these stages, like the steps of a ladder, to the highest principle which is God. This should be understood to mean that all creatures regard and depend on their Creator, and are likened to him in three ways. They may be likened to him as to a creative principle, as to a motive object, or as to an indwelling gift. In the first way all his creatures (*effectus*) are likened to him, in the second way all intellectual creatures (*intellectus*), and in the third way all righteous spirits accepted by God (*acceptus*).

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<sup>41</sup> The verb “hierarchizare” and related forms appear in Bonaventure’s work only later, and most frequently in the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, but his frequent use of the phrase “efficitur hierarchicus” in the *Itinerarium* suggests the same: being made into a hierarchy. For a thorough study of the uses and senses of *hierarchia* and related terms, see Romano Guardini and Werner Dettloff, *Systembildene Elemente in der Theologie Bonaventuras: die Lehren vom lumen mentis, von der gradatio entium, und der influentia sensus et motus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 146-75.

All effects, insofar as they have *being*, have God as their principle. All intellects, insofar as they have illumination, are naturally created to grasp God through knowledge and love, and all righteous and holy spirits are infused with the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>42</sup>

Trace, image, and likeness are not only different ways that God is represented in creation; they also constitute the created order and provide a means of ascent or return (*reductio*) to God. According to Bonaventure's summary in Chapter 7, the *Itinerarium* is an elaboration of that order. Just before the final transformation of the *affectus*, Bonaventure writes, "our mind has contemplated [*contuita*] God outside itself through and in the vestiges; within itself through and in the image; and above itself through the similitude of divine light shining down upon us, and in that light insofar as that is possible in our wayfaring state and by the exercise of our mind" (132). This summary indicates that the contemplations of Chapters 1 and 2 occur, respectively, through and in the vestiges of God in creation, those of Chapters 3 and 4 through and in the image of God in the soul, and those of Chapters 5 and 6 through and in the likeness of divine light.

This structuring principle has been well observed by scholars.<sup>43</sup> Yet the unfolding of the triad in the *itinerarium* is not as neat as the summaries made by scholars or by Bonaventure himself. At the fourth stage, Bonaventure describes the point at which the soul is made a hierarchical, God-conformed dwelling of the Spirit infused with the theological virtues. Since this description conforms unmistakably to his description of the

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<sup>42</sup> *Brev.* 2.12 (Quaracchi V.230).

<sup>43</sup> See especially Jay Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*" and "Respondeo." Note that Steven Brown also sees a correlation in Richard between *sensibilia* and vestiges, *intelligibilia* and images, and *intellectibilia* and, not similitudes, but the divine reality itself. See Brown, "Structural Sources," 5.

*similitudo* in the *Breviloquium* (and in several other places), it would seem that the structuring principle laid out in Chapter 7 is inaccurate. Chapter 4 contains a description of the similitude of God when the summary would lead us to expect a discussion of the image. In fact, Chapter 4 does not mention the similitude as distinct from the image. Has the terminology shifted from the *Breviloquium* to the *Itinerarium*? Or does Bonaventure's own summary misrepresent the contents of the work? While both possibilities must be admitted, the problem deserves further exploration for the light it may shed on Bonaventure's understanding of this triad and of the nature of hierarchy in general.

The conception of the created world as a scale of reflections of God's presence appears throughout Bonaventure's writings. In several of the works dated to his period as *baccalarius* at Paris and regent master of the Franciscan school there, he discusses this scale in terms of the difference between the *vestigium* and *imago* of God in creation. Here *similitudo* sometimes completes the triad.<sup>44</sup> In all of these writings, it is easy enough to understand how these distinctions structure Bonaventure's descriptions of creation and the soul's ascent to God. What is more difficult to determine is precisely what these distinctions *are*. Or, more to the point, to what do these distinctions *refer*?

Most simply, shadow, vestige, and image all refer to God and can be understood as different ways of referring to God. In this sense, although they underlie the order of creation, the distinctions of shadow, vestige, image are not degrees of creatures. And

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. 1 *Sent.* d. 3, p. 1, art. un., q. 2, ad. 4 (Quaracchi I.72-3), where Bonaventure distinguishes the *umbra* as another mode distinct from the *vestigium*.

although they determine what creatures are, they are not properties of creatures.<sup>45</sup>

Bonaventure explains this in the third distinction of the first book in his *Sentences* commentary, and assumes it in later writings. The distinction between *vestigium* and *imago* arises first in the question of whether God is knowable (*cognoscibilis*) through creatures.<sup>46</sup> The fourth *fundamentum*--affirming God's knowability through creatures--introduces the principle that "like is known through like." If God is known through creatures, then creatures must be like God (*similis Deo*), and there are different ways that a creature can be like God: as vestige and as image.

In his responses to the objections, Bonaventure considers the ways in which others have (inadequately) explained the distinction between vestige and image. Some, he notes, simply refer the distinction between vestige and image to the distinction between sensible and spiritual creatures.<sup>47</sup> But "vestige" concerns the ways in which the unity, truth, and goodness of God is evident in creatures, and spiritual creatures, certainly no less than sensible ones, evince these perfections--thus spiritual and sensible creatures alike are vestiges of God. Corporeality is not the basis for the degrees of likeness to God, and, moreover, every created thing, spiritual and corporeal alike, represents God vestigially in exactly the same degree.

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<sup>45</sup> The term *similitudo*, and the triad *vestigium*, *imago*, and *similitudo*, require, I think, a slightly different elaboration, and will be considered below.

<sup>46</sup> 1 *Sent.* d. 3, p. 1, art. un., q. 2 (Quaracchi I:71-74.)

<sup>47</sup> In fact, Bonaventure himself seems to take this position in the first of his *Disputed Questions on the Trinity*, 1.2, concl (Quaracchi V.54): "Every creature is either only a vestige of God--as is corporeal nature--or an image of God, as is the intellectual creature."

Others, Bonaventure continues, understand the distinction between vestige and image as a matter of degree of completeness: a vestige would be a partial representation of God, and an image would represent God as a whole. This is mistaken on two counts: since God is simple, there is no “part” of God to represent. And since God is infinite, no created thing, not even the universe itself, could represent the “whole” of God. Whatever the distinction between the ways of representing God, it is inadmissible to distinguish them based on greater or lesser degrees of completeness. If an image, then, is not more spiritual than a vestige, and if it is not more complete than a vestige, in what sense does this distinction structure a hierarchy? Bonaventure offers several ways in which the image exceeds the vestige. A vestige refers the creature to God according to the threefold principle of causality (efficient, final, and formal), whereas the image refers the creature to God not only as cause but also as *object* of knowledge and love through the three powers of memory, intelligence, and will.

This distinction, however, is based on a prior, and more obvious (*notior*) one: the mode of representing proper to each of these gradations. Both the vestige and image represent God distinctly, but the vestige represents God from a distance or remove (*in elongatio*); the image represents God *in proximity to God (in propinquitae)*. This discussion of *vestigium* and *imago* is situated immediately after a response to the objection that, since the creature is separated from God by an infinite distance, no progression of steps will ever reach God. Bonaventure affirms that if by reaching God one means attaining equality with God, then it is true that no creature will ever arrive. But ascent can also refer to beholding the presence of God (*ad aspectum praesentiae*), and in

this sense ascent is possible insofar as everything in creation was made to lead to God (*quaelibet creatura nata est ducere in Deum*), and to lead through steps.

The spatial language, therefore, that is so integral to Bonaventure's understanding of the created order helps to clarify the proper referents of the terms "vestige" and "image." These distinctions are nothing *in* creatures any more than they are *in* the human intellect which cognizes them; they are different ways in which creatures, the human mind, and God are all related to one another, and degrees of proximity to God. That is to say, they describe relations and not properties, aspects and not entities. Gilson's elaboration of these distinctions and the role they play in Bonaventure's thought remains indispensable: the distinctions constitute what Gilson called Bonaventure's doctrine of universal analogy (a term Bonaventure uses in 1 *Sent.* d. 3 for the likeness between Creator and creature).<sup>48</sup> But it may provide a clearer sense of the distinctions' significance for Bonaventure to say that they constitute a theory of universal analogy. For the ontological resemblances that ground analogy are themselves grounded in the *reductio* towards which all creation is ordered.

Subsequent discussions of the triad of *vestigium*, *imago*, and *similitudo* in Bonaventure's writings only make this analogical dynamic clearer. In the passage from the *Breviloquium* cited above, Bonaventure compares the distinctions to "rungs of a ladder," upon which "the human mind is designed to ascend step-by-step" to God. The Augustinian distinction between *imago* and *similitudo*, furnished with thirteenth-century distinctions concerning grace, further emphasizes the role of creation in the soul's ascent

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<sup>48</sup> Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 185-214.

or *reductio* to God. The rungs of the ladder are explained as degrees of conformity to God, each distinguished by its own triad reflecting the Trinity:

For a creature cannot have God as its Principle unless it is conformed to Him in unity, truth, and goodness. Nor can it have God as its object unless it grasps Him through memory, intelligence, and will. And it cannot have God as an infused Gift unless it is conformed to Him through faith, hope, and love, the threefold gift. And the first conformity is distant, the second close, and the third most proximate. That is why the first is called a vestige of the Trinity, the second an image, and the third a likeness.<sup>49</sup>

The most intimate conformity--that of the image transformed into a likeness--comes about, as Bonaventure also explains in the *Itinerarium*, through the infused gift of the theological virtues. Yet even in the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure does not consistently refer to the triad of vestige, image, and likeness.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, in both the *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* and *The Reduction of Arts to Theology*, Bonaventure refers only to vestige and image. Amidst the fluctuations in terms, these passages advance a consistent view that 1) all things have God as their creative principle and reflect God's unity, truth, and goodness; 2) among creatures, rational beings have God as their object as well as their cause; and as such, 3) they have the capacity to be drawn into God and conformed to God's likeness through infused grace.

In the *Itinerarium*, Chapter 3 discusses the image of God in the natural powers of the soul, and Chapter 4 the likeness of God in the reformed powers. Similarly,

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<sup>49</sup> *Brev.* 2.12 (Quaracchi V.230).

<sup>50</sup> In the first chapter, Bonaventure refers only to the distinction of vestige and image: "In accordance with our condition, the totality of things [*rerum universitas*] is a ladder for ascending to God. And among things, some are vestiges, others images; some corporeal, others spiritual; some temporal, others, everlasting; some things are outside us, and some within us" (46).



Bonaventure writes in the *Sentences* commentary that the image concerns the natural and likeness the gratuitous.<sup>51</sup> Yet the distinction serves only to draw a closer connection between what belongs to nature and what belongs to grace, for it is just such a dichotomy that the dynamic of vestige, image, and likeness forcefully resists--nature and grace, image and likeness, belong to a single order and movement.<sup>52</sup> Creation is so ordered as to lead the mind, through the operations of its own powers, toward the excess and overcoming of itself. The transformation of the image into the likeness (*similitudo*) through the infusion of the virtues, the *mentales excessus* of the lover, and the hierarchical operations, means that the rational creature is created with a natural desire for intimacy with God that it cannot realize with its own God-given powers. This is what it means to say that the created order is itself an ecstatic order. The triad of vestige, image, and likeness in creation orders the human mind to excess.

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<sup>51</sup> “Secundus modus distinguendi est, quod imago est in *naturalibus*, et similitudo in *gratuitis*, qui similiter habet ortum ex illa *prima* differentia. Quia enim *imago* dicit *configurationem*; et illa attenditur ex parte naturalium potentiarum animae, scilicet memoriae, intelligentiae et voluntatis: hinc est, quod imago est in *naturalibus*. Quia vero *similitudo* dicit convenientiam, quae ortum habet a *qualitate*; et qualitas, in qua anima similatur Deo, haec est gratia: ideo *similitudo* dicitur in *gratuitis* esse,” 2 *Sent.* d. 16, a. 2, q. 3, concl. (Quaracchi II.405).

<sup>52</sup> Turner maintains, though in a carefully qualified way, that the passage from stages three to four is the hinge of nature and grace in the movement of ascent. Turner’s qualification is that, in keeping with the nature of *hierarchia*, the fourth stage does not exclude the operations of nature as seen in the first three stages, but takes them up and transforms them. While I do not disagree with Turner’s basic point here, I maintain, as noted above, that the distinction between the operations of nature and the operations of grace is complicated not only by the non-linear nature of the *itinerarium*, but by the excess that structures each of its stages. See Turner, *Darkness of God*, 112-13; and *Eros and Allegory*, 145-49.

The dynamic and ecstatic nature of this created order is reflected in the structure of the *Itinerarium* itself. Bonaventure's summary divides the work into three parts: in the first two stages the mind contemplates the vestiges of God in creation, in the second two the image of God in itself, and in the final two the likeness of the divine brightness. This threefold structure is evident in the content of the chapters, but the division is not as simple as the summary suggests. Just as Chapter 4 (whose heading identifies its subject as the image of God in the soul) describes the infusion of the virtues into the soul, Chapters 2 and 6 also anticipate the stage immediately following. In Chapter 2, contemplation on the vestiges of God in sensible things develops naturally into an exploration of the capacities of the soul to apprehend, take pleasure in, and judge all sensible things. In this way, the inward turn of Chapter 3 is already begun at the previous level. Similarly, in the sixth contemplation, the intellect begins to fail at the consideration of the Trinity: "When in the sixth stage, the mind will have reached the point in which it sees in the first and highest Principle and in the mediator of God and humanity, Jesus Christ. No likeness [*similia*] whatsoever of these things is found among creatures, and they exceed every grasp of the human intellect" (132). Like the delineation of the powers of the soul in Cistercian treatises such as Isaac of Stella's, the stages of contemplation not only touch each other, but even overlap. For Bonaventure, this contiguity becomes the means by which the *transitus* takes place--the lower stages leading, as if inevitably, to the higher, such that excess is entailed in the created order. The staged reflections of God's light which structure the successive illuminations of the soul, then, contain within them the darkness to which they ultimately lead.

7. *The passing over of the affectus and the death of the soul*

Adopting Richard's symbolism for the highest stages of contemplation, Bonaventure illustrates the fifth and sixth stages of the *itinerarium* with the facing cherubim seated on the Ark of the Covenant. Here, however, the Ark symbolism is placed within the motif of the tabernacle, with the fifth and sixth stages found at the innermost part of the temple, the Holy of Holies.<sup>53</sup> The two cherubim are two modes or grades of contemplating the *invisibilia* of God, namely the two names of God, Being and Good. In the first case, the mind contemplates the divine essence; in the second, the persons of the Trinity. Though each may be contemplated individually, only contemplating together the essence and the persons, the unity and the trinity, the being and the goodness of God, is the mind suspended in the highest wonder (*in admirationem altissimam suspendaris*) and to the perfection of the mind's illuminations (126). Contemplating the unity and trinity together, the mind beholds mysteries surpassing the discerning powers (*perspicacitas*) of the intellect. The consummation of the mind's contemplations, in a sense, already entails its own surpassing, and so brings about the *excessus mentis* in which the intellect rests entirely.

The summary of the six contemplations at the beginning of Chapter 7 recalls, especially, the language used to describe the fourth stage: "We have explained now these

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<sup>53</sup> For an analysis of the temple motif that structures the *Itinerarium*, see Bernard McGinn, "Ascension and Introversion in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*," in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974*, vol. 3 (Rome: Grottaferrata, 1974) 535-552; Lillian Turney, "The Symbolism of the Temple in St. Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Fordham University, 1968).

six considerations, like the six steps to the true throne of Solomon, by which peace is attained. Here the true person of peace (*verus pacificus*) rests in a peaceful soul (*in mente pacifica*) as in an interior Jerusalem” (133). The summary also echoes on several notes the opening invocation of the prologue, in which Bonaventure prays for the peace of Francis, who “was like a citizen of that Jerusalem about which that man of peace...says: Pray for those things which are for the peace of Jerusalem. For he knew that there was no throne of Solomon except in peace, since it is written: His place was in peace, and his dwelling in Sion” (35). In the prologue, Bonaventure describes his journey to La Verna, a place of quiet, to find peace. Now nearing the end of the work, Bonaventure’s summary reveals how many layers of allegory are condensed into this “place”--the place of Francis’s vision, which was the throne of Solomon in the heavenly Jerusalem. This heavenly Jerusalem, in the course of the soul’s ecstatic journey to it, *takes place* within the soul so that the soul finds this peace within itself and, at the same time, above itself. The celestial hierarchy is imaged in the interior hierarchy, established through the hierarchical operations (purgation, illumination, and perfection) which are ecstasies of the soul in love with Christ. Raised above itself, the soul contemplates God through and in the similitude of divine light.

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This is the end of the *itinerarium*, for there is nowhere else for the soul, raised to the height of contemplation, to go. After this point only death remains, but it is not the journey’s destination. For if the consummation of contemplation brings rest, death sets the soul in motion in a different manner. “Having contemplated all these things, it

remains for the soul to transcend and pass over (*transcendat et transeat*) not only the sensible world, but the soul itself” (132). This movement, the *excessus mentis*, is not a stage of contemplation, like the *mentales excessus* of the fourth stage. There the lover’s ecstasies were outside the soul and simultaneously interior to it. Here, by contrast, the phrase *excessus mentis* emphasizes the soul’s going out from itself, especially given that the phrase is used interchangeably with the term *transitus*. There is no indication, however, that the difference holds great significance for Bonaventure; his use of the terms is fluid. The Chapter 7 heading identifies the topic as “de excessu mentali et mystico.”

Moreover, Bonaventure discusses the going out or passing over of the soul which is the subject of Chapter 7 throughout the *Itinerarium*. In the prologue, Bonaventure’s first gloss on the seraph of Francis’s vision identifies the six wings as six “illuminationum suspensiones.” Bonaventure writes that the cruciform seraph of Francis’s vision indicated the *suspensio* of the father in contemplation (*ipsius patris suspensionem in contemplando*) (36). The father is Francis lifted up in ecstasy, but Francis’s *suspensio* is itself conformed to Christ suspended on the cross--just as Paul, carried off (*raptum*) to the third heaven, could say that he was nailed to the cross with Christ.<sup>54</sup> By identifying the six stages as six *suspensiones*, the prologue declares the entire ascent, from the contemplation of corporeal natures to the final passing over, to be the *via crucis*. The lexical connection is completed in the seventh chapter, when the soul in ascent says the words of Job: “My soul (*anima*) chooses hanging (*suspendium*), and my bones death.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Boehner’s notes to the *Itinerarium* draw many of these lexical connections. See *Works* vol. 2, 146nn6-7.

<sup>55</sup> “Suspendium elegit anima mea, et mortem ossa mea,” *Itin.*, 138.

*Suppensio* leads to *supsendium*; the groans of prayer that initiate the ascent of the soul anticipate its consummation on the cross.

The layered scriptural and Christological allusions in the seventh chapter perform the *excessus* depicted there. In ecstasy, nothing is simply what it is--every image empties out into another. The soul, like the language used to describe it, is beside itself. The movement of ascent, the *transitus*, is the rapture of Paul, which is the passing through the Red Sea, which is the Passover, which is the *pascha*, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, which is, in a word whose shock is undiminished by the density of allusion, simply death.<sup>56</sup> *Moriamur*, exhorts Bonaventure: "Let us die, then, and enter into this darkness" (138). The darkness of death is the end of the illuminations and the consuming heat of desire: "not light, but the fire that inflames totally and carries one (*transferentem*) into God through excessive fervor and the most burning affections."<sup>57</sup> In his *Sentences* commentary, Bonaventure distinguished the cognitive and affective parts of the soul with reference to the light and heat of fire, respectively.<sup>58</sup> Here those same properties appear again, this time in the uncanny image of a fire that gives heat without light. In the

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<sup>56</sup> Bonaventure's last work, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, just as frankly posits the necessity of death, and its connection to ascent and to love: "quia oportet hominem mori per illum amorem, ut sursum agatur," *Col. Hex*, Princ.2.31 Ed. Ferdinand Delorme, Bibl. Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi, vol. 8 (Ad Claras Aquas: Florentiae ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1934). On Bonaventure's conception of mystical death see Alois M. Haas, *Sermo Mysticus: Studien zu Theologie und Sprache der Deutschen Mystik* (Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1979), 406-409. Haas rightly insists that *mors* for Bonaventure is not merely metaphorical, but expresses a reality as physical as the crucified incarnation of the Word.

<sup>57</sup> "...non lucem, sed ignem totaliter inflammantem et in Deum excessivis unctionibus et ardentissimis affectionibus transferentem," *Itin.*, 138.

<sup>58</sup> See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

*Sentences* commentary, the reference to the properties of fire provides the basis for an analytical distinction, even if those properties are always concurrent in act. Here we see that, at the end of the soul's journey into God, the properties of light and heat, of intellectual knowledge and affective desire, are separable--and in fact must be so if the soul's ascent is to be consummated. "In this passing over, if it is to be perfect, all intellectual operations (*intellectuales operationes*) must be abandoned, and our *apex affectus* must be entirely carried into (*transferetur*) and transformed into God."<sup>59</sup>

"Intellectual operations" is a quotation from the opening of Dionysius's *Mystical Theology*, which Bonaventure quotes at length following this statement: "Abandon sense and intellectual operations (*intellectuales operationes*), sensible and invisible things, and all nonbeing and being, and, insofar as possible, be restored, unknowing (*inscius*), to unity with the one who is above all essence and knowledge (*scientiam*)."<sup>60</sup> Bonaventure's statement that intellectual operations must be abandoned and the *apex affectus* transferred into God functions then as a gloss on the Dionysian passage. The Dionysian reference makes clear that the *excessus mentis* is truly a state of unknowing. Affect is introduced not to reinstate the knowledge that Dionysius so emphatically excludes from union, but to give an account of the dynamics of union beyond knowing.

Desire is the agent of the soul's movement into God and its transformation; through the image of fire by which this desire is depicted, Bonaventure insists that such

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<sup>59</sup> "In hoc autem transitu, si sit perfectus, oportet quod relinquantur omnes intellectuales operationes, et apex affectus totus transferatur et transformetur in Deum," *Itin.* 7.4.

<sup>60</sup> "sensus desere et intellectuales operationes et sensibilia et invisibilia et omne non ens et ens, et ad unitatem, ut possibile est, inscius restituere ipsius, qui est super omnem essentiam et scientiam." *Itin.* 7.5.

desire is no possession or activity of the soul. *Qui quidem ignis Deus est*: “It is God who is this fire.” Fire is the most active element, and the most responsible for motion--to identify God with fire here is to name God as the agency that inhabits and moves the soul, as well as the desire that consumes it.<sup>61</sup> “And it is Christ who starts the fire with the intense heat of his burning passion” (138).<sup>62</sup> In his final exhortations, Bonaventure invites the pilgrim soul to silence all its wants--the word is *concupiscentiis*, not *desideriis*. For desire is not a having, like *conscientia*, or an operation of the soul, like contemplation; it is the grace of Christ’s passion *taking place* in the soul.<sup>63</sup> This desire can be enlarged and perfected *in excessus mentis* only because it always already, from the very beginning of ascent, exceeds the soul. Whereas, for Richard, the desire that attends ecstasy has no precedent among the affections of the soul, in Bonaventure’s account, the same desire that finally overwhelms the soul has in fact been innate to the soul all along. When all the powers of the soul are silenced or abandoned in the “pacified soul” (*in mente pacifica*), desire remains because it is not a power of the soul. It is, both at the beginning and end of ascent, the capacity of the soul to be moved above and outside itself, not by its own self-motion but by the drawing of its beloved. The transfer of the affect into God means the

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<sup>61</sup> On fire as the active, motive element, see 2 *Sent.* d. 15 (Quarrachi II.379-81).

<sup>62</sup> On Bonaventure’s use of the term *passio* see Erich Auerbach, “Excursus: *Gloria Passionis*,” in *Literary Language and its Public in Late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon, 1965), 67-81.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Thomas Gallus’s account of the *hierarchia mentis*: “The lowest hierarchy of mind consists in its very own nature; the middle in what it can do by effort, which incomparably exceeds nature; the highest in ecstasy (*excessus mentis*). At the lowest, only nature is at work; at the highest, only grace; at the middle, both grace and effort work together.” (trans. Turner, *Eros and Allegory*, 321).



surrender of all the soul's higher operations and self-motion--a ceasing of activity bestowed on the soul as its long-desired death.

Of course the *transitus* of the affections into God is not *simply* death. For the passing over is that of the *mens*, properly speaking--the higher contemplative capacity of the soul, and not the *anima* in its nutritive and sensitive operations. But what does the death of *mens* leave, after a journey in which the soul has been alienated from its senses, but a soul bereft of its sense, intellect, and capacity for movement-- an inanimate soul, or, in other words, a body?

#### Chapter 4: Affect and Action in the *Legenda Maior*

With the language of death in the final passage of the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure insists that the *excessus mentis* is not simply a matter of abandoning intellectual operations in favor of affective operations. The *transitus* into God involves, after all, a *transformation* of the highest part of the *affectus*, and the drawing of that transformed affect into God. What does this transformation entail, if it is not simply the death of the intellect? What must occur within the affect for the journey to reach its end? The answer to this question (insofar as an explanation is possible for what Bonaventure describes as “mystical and most secret”) gets at the heart of the ecstatic death that the *Itinerarium* depicts. It involves, I suggest, not only the abandonment of the intellect, but also, and more radically, the abandonment of what Bonaventure properly calls the will (*voluntas*).

Though the seventh chapter of the *Itinerarium* contains no detailed discussion of the nature of affect, Bonaventure’s writings on the various aspects of the soul’s affective part lay the groundwork for and are consistent with the transformation by fire that occurs there. Making that case will require a look at what Bonaventure understands the will (*voluntas*) to be, and how it relates to the affective part of the soul (*pars affectiva*, or simply *affectus*), on the one hand, and to free choice (*liberum arbitrium*) on the other.<sup>1</sup> The first part of this chapter examines Bonaventure’s theory of the *voluntas* and how it

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<sup>1</sup> On the development of the concept of *voluntas* more generally in Latin Christian theology, see Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of the Will in Classical Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), and N. Gilbert, “The Concept of the Will in Early Latin Philosophy,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 11 (1973), 299-317. On the understanding of *voluntas* and its relation to the intellect and free choice in the later middle ages, see Bonnie Kent, *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Thirteenth Century* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995).

relates to the higher part of the *affectus*. The second part examines a very different kind of account of affective transformation--but one, I argue, that is consistent with and helps to elaborate the vision of affective abandonment witnessed in the *Itinerarium*. The *Legenda Maior*, Bonaventure's longer life of Francis of Assisi, depicts in the person of Francis the abandonment of the will for which the affective part of the soul is created. It culminates in the inflaming and death of Francis's soul, transforming him into an exemplar of affective fervor that is witnessed in his wounded and dying body.

### *1. Nature and Necessity in the Affective Part of the Soul*

In order for the distinction between *liberum arbitrium*, the *voluntas*, and the *affectus* even to be legible in English, the misleading translation of *liberum arbitrium* as "free will" must first be abandoned.<sup>2</sup> This translation, among its other faults, obscures the painstaking distinctions by which medieval theologians sought to understand the rational capacities and limits of human beings--both intellectual and voluntary--to deliberate, judge, decide, and act.<sup>3</sup> The translations of *liberum arbitrium* as "free choice" or "free

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<sup>2</sup> See J. Korolec, "Free Will and Free Choice," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 630: "The will itself was defined as the rational appetite, or the desire for the good apprehended by reason, and not in terms of a capacity for choosing between alternatives." Cited in Kent, 98. Kent notes, however, that after 1270, though *liberum arbitrium* remained a common topic of inquiry, some masters began to discuss the problem of *voluntas libera* or *libertas voluntatis*.

<sup>3</sup> The modern association of "rational" with "intellectual" or "cognitive" is also a misleading approach to medieval theological uses of the adjective *rationalis* whose range of meaning for Bonaventure I discuss below. *Rationalis* and *intellectualis*, though not entirely discrete terms for Bonaventure, nevertheless are not synonymous, as I will suggest.

decision” avoid the confusion that the term “will” introduces, and better captures the sense of *arbitrium* as an activity or capacity to act, rather than as a distinct power.

Augustine had declared that free choice refers to the soul as a whole. For Bonaventure this means that free choice spans the most basic division of the soul’s powers, the cognitive and the affective.<sup>4</sup> As Bonaventure writes in the *Breviloquium*, “Freedom from compulsion is nothing else than a faculty of will and reason, which are the principal powers of the soul.”<sup>5</sup> The name itself implies this: *libertas* belongs properly to the will (*voluntas*), wherein lies the capacity for self-motion and command (*imperium*) of all the other powers, while *arbitrium*, which is synonymous with judgment (*iudicium*), belongs to the cognitive part, whereby the soul is able to reflect upon its own act and discern right from wrong.<sup>6</sup> To simplify a long and complex discussion, Bonaventure defines free choice as a habit or faculty belonging to reason and will (distinguished from each in some way but without constituting an entirely separate power). By it the soul acts deliberately and free from external coercion. Free choice is begun in reason and completed in the will, and for this reason is properly said to be in the will more than it is in reason.

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<sup>4</sup> “Augustinus de Quinque Responsionibus 4 ‘Cum de libero arbitrio loquimur, non de parte animae loquimur, sed de tota’: ergo non tantummodo comprehendit cognitivam, immo etiam affectivam,” 2 *Sent.* d. 25, p. 1, art. un., q. 3, fund. 1 (Quaracchi II.597). The common definition of *liberum arbitrium* as a “faculty of will and reason” was taken from Lombard’s *Sentences* II.25, though it was commonly misattributed to Augustine.

<sup>5</sup> Brev. II.9 (Quaracchi V.226).

<sup>6</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 25, p. 1, art. un., q. 1, concl. (Quaracchi II.592 ); and *ibid.*, q. 3, concl. (Quaracchi II.598).

Even though free choice spans the entire soul, it does not, Bonaventure clarifies, encompass the whole of reason or will. After concluding that free choice comprehends the reason and will, he deals with two arguments that reason and will are each more than that which properly pertains to free choice. Bonaventure concedes the point and offers a clarification:

To the objection that free choice does not comprehend the whole of reason nor the whole of the will, it must be said that this is true. Rather, free choice comprehends the cognitive power only insofar as it is joined to the affective, and it comprehends the affective insofar as it is joined to the cognitive. Thus it can be called a “deliberative affect,” or a “voluntary deliberation.” And therefore, since “reason” refers to the cognitive power as it is ordered to the affective, and “will” refers to the affective power as it is regulated and made rational by the cognitive, thus it is better to say that free choice is a faculty of the will and reason than a faculty of the intellect and the affect.<sup>7</sup>

Free choice, then, is simply the name for what happens when the soul’s powers act in concert. But the response reveals a significant aspect of Bonaventure’s understanding of the division of the soul: The will is not coextensive with affect, just as reason is not coextensive with intellect. Bonaventure acknowledges some affective capacity that is not *voluntas*, that is, a way of looking at affect in itself and not joined to intellect. What does this encompass? The objection that occasioned the reply gives an indication: “Our will is unchangeable (*impermutable*) with respect to some things; but whatever our free choice

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<sup>7</sup> Quod enim obiicitur, quod non comprehendit totam rationem, nec totam voluntatem; dicendum, quod verum est; sed comprehendit solum ipsam potentiam cognitivam, in quantum iuncta est affectivae, et affectivam, in quantum iuncta est cognitivae; unde dicit affectum deliberativum, vel deliberationem voluntariam. Et propterea, quia ratio nominat ipsam potentiam cognitivam ut ordinatam ad affectivam, et voluntas ipsam affectivam ut regulatam et ratiocinatam a cognitiva; hinc est, quod liberum arbitrium potius dicitur facultas voluntatis et rationis quam intellectus et affectus (2 *Sent.* 25, p. 1, art. un., q. 3, ad 2, 3 [Quaracchi II.599]).

desires, it desires changeably (*permutabiliter*).<sup>8</sup> As Bonaventure explains at length in the twenty-fourth distinction of the same book of his commentary, the affective part of the soul can be divided, in a sense, into two aspects or activities--one in which the soul necessarily and unchangeably desires the Good or beatitude; and one in which the will, in conjunction with reason, deliberates and chooses among different proximate goods. "It must be conceded that the natural will and the deliberative will are a single power, which is called natural or deliberative according to its mode of moving. The power by which I desire beatitude is the same as that by which I desire a virtue for doing this or that good thing ordained to beatitude. In desiring beatitude, it is called natural, since its desire is unchangeably inclined to beatitude. But as it desires to do this or that good, it is called deliberative, and according to the judgment of reason it is able to incline to the contrary."<sup>9</sup> The idea that reason is capable of contraries was a common scholastic assumption derived from Aristotle.<sup>10</sup> For medieval theologians, "contrary" is used broadly to mean contingent existents: the soul is free to choose among things that could be otherwise. For Bonaventure here the emphasis is on possible acts that the soul may elect to perform. By contrast, the soul is not free to choose beatitude as the object of its desire--not because it is constrained to do so but because the Good in which beatitude

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<sup>8</sup> 2 Sent. d. 25, p. 1, art. un., q. 3, contr. 3 (Quaracchi II.598).

<sup>9</sup> "Concedendum est igitur, quod naturalis voluntas et deliberativa potest esse eadem potentia, quae quidem secundum alium et alium modum movendi sic et sic appellatur. Eadem enim est potentia, qua appeto beatitudinem, et qua appeto virtutem, sive facere hoc bonum vel illud ad beatitudinem ordinatum; quae, ut appetit beatitudinem, dicitur naturalis, quia immutabiliter appetitus eius ad beatitudinem inclinatur; ut vero appetit hoc vel illud bonum facere, deliberativa dicitur, et secundum iudicium rationis potest ad contrarium inclinari," 2 Sent. d. 24, p. 1, a. 2, q. 3, concl. (Quaracchi II.566).

<sup>10</sup> *Metaphysics* IX, 3 and 10.

consists has no contrary, evil being only a privation of the Good.<sup>11</sup> Thus the distinction of the affective part on the basis of different modes of moving is itself based on a difference in the objects of desire. The Good is not one among a number of desirable objects but the source and end of every desire.<sup>12</sup>

This same distinction appears in Bonaventure's explanation of synderesis discussed in Chapter 1. Here, however, the question concerns whether the natural and deliberative wills are essentially distinct powers. And in arguing the negative position Bonaventure encounters the difficulty of demonstrating how the will can be rational and yet incapable of contraries in its natural movement. The arguments for the affirmative state explicitly the theological risk that lurks in all of Bonaventure's discussions of synderesis and the natural will: how is this innate and immutable desire for the good--the spark by which an otherwise fallen human nature remains upright--distinguishable from nonhuman varieties of desire, either simple natural attraction or brute animal instinct? If there is in the affective part of the soul both an immutable and an indeterminate will, then there must be two wills, the first irrational, the second capable of rational deliberation. The division, as the argument goes, would safeguard the rational nature of the deliberative will against the apparent irrationality of natural instinct, and, by extension, the uniquely human character of human desire: "The power that we have in common with brute animals cannot be the same as the power by which we differ from them. But we are like brute animals with regard to natural appetite, and we differ with regard to our

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<sup>11</sup> Thus, free choice can only choose evil insofar as free choice itself is deficient, as Bonaventure explains in 2 *Sent.* d. 25, p. 2, art. un., q. 3, concl. (Quaracchi II.614).

<sup>12</sup> See *Itin.* 3.4, and discussion in previous chapter.

rational appetite. For just as brute animals naturally desire the preservation of their being, so do we too desire this.”<sup>13</sup> Though it is not named here, the question invokes something like the Stoic conception of *oikeiosis*, the natural and nonrational desire for self-preservation found in human infants and animals alike.<sup>14</sup> In response Bonaventure distinguishes two senses of “natural.” On the one hand, there is a way of distinguishing natural and deliberative desires on the basis of different objects, “such as when one is desirable only by a rational substance, and another object is desired by an animal substance.” But on the other hand, when it is a matter of a common object that is desired naturally or deliberatively, the two desires are essentially one, and differ only in their mode of desiring. In this sense, “we say that synderesis is a natural will which naturally inclines and incites us toward the honest good and murmurs against evil. And we call the deliberative appetite the will by which, after deliberation, we cling sometimes to a good, sometimes to evil.” Thus, the natural will (which humans share in common with nonrational animals) constitutes a natural appetite directed towards a good that is desirable to a creature with or without reason.<sup>15</sup>

The mention of synderesis indicates that there is another way that desire can be natural, while also remaining essentially rational. A certain logic opposes this, too, as

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<sup>13</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 24, p. 1, a. 2, q. 3 (Quaracchi II.565).

<sup>14</sup> See Richard Sorabji, “The Concept of the Will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor,” in Thomas Pink and M. W. F. Stone, eds., *The Will and Human Action: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 20-22. Sorabji argues that Maximus’s conception of the natural will (*thelema phusikon*) is directly related to this Stoic idea. See also Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), chs. 12 and 13.

<sup>15</sup> Bonaventure neither endorses nor refutes the conception of animal natural will as a self-preservation instinct.



evidenced by the second objection: as Aristotle says, the rational powers are capable of contraries, that is, of choosing this or that object of intellection or desire. But to be moved naturally to an object is to be moved singly (*uniformiter*) and to be moved rationally is to be moved changeably (*vertibiliter*). In this way, the argument implies, a naturally moved desire is by definition not a rationally moved desire.

The force of Bonaventure's refutation to this objection is difficult to register, but it helps to clarify the stakes of the question:

The rational will is ordained to *something* such that it in no way desires its contrary, as is clear in the ordination of our will to beatitude and felicity. And although it is determinately inclined to beatitude, this very same power of the will is nevertheless indeterminate with regard to many kinds of desirable objects, so that it is made to be moved to opposites. And for this reason the power is natural, while not ceasing to be rational and deliberative.<sup>16</sup>

The response clarifies the definition of "rational," which means, for the present purposes, to be determined toward beatitude and free to deliberate on everything else. It is clear now that the will must be essentially one--for if it were truly divided into a natural and deliberative power, then there would be an irrationality at the center of human desire. The end for which human beings were created as rational beings would be itself irrational, the object of an irrational appetite.

This is, as Bonaventure insists, not the case: the will is wholly rational because it is capable of contraries, even if not in every case. A purely natural power is one that

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<sup>16</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 24, p. 1, a. 2, q. 3, ad. 2 (Quaracchi II.566).

cannot be otherwise. Fire, to use Bonaventure's example here, heats and illumines.<sup>17</sup> It cannot do otherwise. But the will is rational because it is capable of contraries in most cases. Yet how strange, from a certain perspective, that the rationality of human beings' desire should come into question precisely where the ultimate and highest end of human rationality is concerned. If humans were to desire this ultimate end in such a way that they could not deliberate as to proximate ends--if the natural will were distinct from the deliberative will--then human desire for beatitude would be akin to the physical properties of the simple bodies.

Yet though the natural and deliberative wills are not in fact two powers, they are two diverse motions. The natural will is moved immutably and necessarily--rationally, yet without the deliberative and cognitive operations of reason. If *liberum arbitrium* is the operation of the will insofar as it is joined to cognition, then, it would seem to follow that the natural movement towards beatitude is not, strictly speaking, an operation of *liberum arbitrium*. The will is not coerced into desiring beatitude. But neither is the soul free to deliberate concerning the natural desire for the Good which is the end of all human activity, however much it may deliberate as to whether to assent to this desire.<sup>18</sup> Yet, as Bonaventure insists in the *Breviloquium*, free choice and beatitude have everything to do

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<sup>17</sup> "Si autem sic esset determinata ad unum quod nullo modo posset in opposita, sicut est potentia calefaciendi et illuminandi in igne, tunc esset pure naturalis, et non esset deliberativa sive rationalis," 2 *Sent.* d. 24, p. 1, a. 2, q. 3, ad 2 (Quaracchi II.566).

<sup>18</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 25, p. 2, art. un., q. 2, concl. (Quaracchi II.596).

with each other. “Attaining beatitude is not glorious unless it is through merit, and there is no merit is something unless it is done voluntarily and freely.”<sup>19</sup>

How can beatitude be the sole object about which the soul does not deliberate, and at the same time be the end and glory of the soul’s power of free choice? And what kind of moral pedagogy does such a seemingly paradoxical end require? When Bonaventure turns to these questions in the following distinction, he turns again to animals.

## 2. *Free Choice and the Interiority of Desire*

It is telling that the first question that Bonaventure treats on the subject of *liberum arbitrium* is whether the faculty is found in non-rational animals. Augustine’s declaration that “When we speak of free choice, we are speaking not of a part of the soul, but of the whole” (a key *auctoritas* for scholastic reflection on the subject), positions free choice as the very definition of spiritual substance, in which humans and the higher intelligences participate by virtue of their rationality. So the question of free choice in brute animals is not an oblique opening. Rather, it gets to the heart of what free choice is and what it does theologically. And Bonaventure’s resolution of the question is unequivocal: “It must be said that free choice is without a doubt found in rational substances alone.”<sup>20</sup>

In his conclusion, Bonaventure explains that to affirm *liberum arbitrium* in rational creatures is to affirm two things: their special liberty and their distinctive capacity for judgment or choice. On the first count, to be “free” means, on the one hand,

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<sup>19</sup> *Brev.* II.9 (Quaracchi V.227).

<sup>20</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 25, p. 1, art. un, q. 1, concl. (Quaracchi II.593).

to be unconstrained in desiring and in fleeing an object of the concupiscible or irascible appetite. Anything that can be desired or fled can be so on account of three types of desiderata: the delectable or pleasurable, the agreeable or convenient, and the Good itself, that is, the *bonum honestum*. While irrational animals can desire or flee an object on account of its delectability or agreeability, only rational substances are capable of desiring the Good itself--that is, the intrinsic and highest good which is the object of synderesis. The rational substance is the only one that can be said to be truly free, since it is unconstrained with respect to all three genera of desiderata. Thus, in an apparent paradox, what makes rational substances free is their necessary and natural inclination to the Good. It is not actually a paradox in Bonaventure's account, however, since the necessity of desiring the good is no restriction on the soul's liberty; it is, in fact, following Augustine, the very condition of liberty.

At the same time, to be free means being totally unconstrained not only with respect to the object of desire, but also with respect to the act of desire. While animals may be able (or can be trained) to restrain themselves from acting on their appetites, they cannot, Bonaventure assumes, restrain the interior act of desire itself. "And so if they love (*amant*) something, they are unable *not* to love it." What appears as self-restraint in irrational animals will always turn out to be a constraint of some feared outcome (punishment, for example). "And this is why John of Damascus says that 'they are more acted upon than acting (*magis aguntur quam agant*)', because the agent of restraint in animals is always external to them." Rational beings, by contrast, can restrain not only the exterior act of desire, but even the interior desire. The rational will can choose to stop

loving something it previously loved, without any external stimulus or threat provoking the change. That is to say, the rational will can truly restrain *itself*, and this capacity for self-reversion is crucial to the distinction between rational and irrational appetite.

Bonaventure cites Anselm to the effect that the rational will is “a self-moving instrument,” and maintains that even though animals seem to move from some intrinsic cause, the interior appetite arises in every case from an exterior object rather than true self-motion.<sup>21</sup>

Both with respect to objects and acts of the appetite, a certain notion of interiority defines true voluntary liberty. With respect to the object of desire, only the rational and thus truly free creature is able to desire the intrinsic good of something, as opposed to its goodness “for me” as a source of pleasure or advantage. With respect to the act of desire, the rational will has control over its own interior impulses; no outside force need act upon the will for its movement. A similar interiority and the capacity for self-reversion also

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<sup>21</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 25, p. 1, art. un, q. 1, ad 4 (Quarracchi II.594). See also 1 *Sent.* 1, dist 37, p. 2, a. 2, q. 1, ad. 3 (Quaracchi I.658), where in response to the question of whether the fact that angels move indicates imperfection, Bonaventure distinguishes natural and voluntary movements--voluntary movements do not indicate any sort of lack in the one moving, whereas natural movement is always from lack or imperfection, since perfection in nature is a state of rest: “To the objection that all that is moved is moved on account of indigence, this must be admitted to be true in natural motion [*in motu naturali*], in which a nature moves only through an appetite for something. And this appetite stands as an imperfection in that nature. since a nature, once it attains its perfection, is at rest. But this is not true in the case of voluntary motion [*in motu voluntario*], in which something is moved either for the purpose of acquiring something, or to demonstrate its virtue, just as a gladiator is moved in the stadium. Or it must be said that it is true in every motion, insofar as ‘indigence’ can be taken generally...For in this way indigence can be posited either to a being whose privation indicates an imperfection, or to a being whose privation is not an imperfection, but a limitation, and the latter is case in Angels.”

characterize the second of the two words in free choice (*liberum arbitrium*), which, Bonaventure argues, belongs properly to rational substances alone.

Arbitration (*arbitrium*) is the same as judgment (*iudicium*), at whose command (*nutum*) the other virtues are moved and obey. And “to judge” with a complete accounting (*secundum rationem completam*) is proper to that which discerns between the just and the unjust, and between what is proper to oneself and what is proper to another. And no power knows (*novit*) what is just and unjust except the one which participates in reason and which is made to recognize (*cognoscere*) the Highest Justice, from which comes the rule of every law.<sup>22</sup>

The power that participates in reason is the mind, which is the image of God, and which alone is able to know itself and its own act. “And no power that is bound to matter ever knows itself, nor is turned back upon itself.” Since the rational substance alone among the powers of the soul is not bound to matter, then only reason is capable of self-reversion, and is thus capable of judging what is proper to oneself and what is *alienus*.

The Quaracchi editors attribute this assertion to the pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber de Causis*, a digest and paraphrase of Proclus’s *Elements of Theology*.<sup>23</sup> This indirect invocation of the Proclean understanding of *nous* as the self-reverting principle indicates that interiority, as a capacity for self-reversion through self-knowledge and self-motion, is central to the conception of rationality and of the *voluntas* as the rational appetite. In this sense, a natural motion of the will is not contrary to reason, insofar as the inclination to the good, while not itself subject to deliberation or error, is innate to the soul, fully intrinsic to the will which desires it. The self-determining character of the will is thus

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<sup>22</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 25, p. 1, art. un, q. 1, concl. (Quarrachi II.593).

<sup>23</sup> *Liber de Causis* XV.124, ed. Adriaan Pattin, in *Tijdschrift voor filosofie* 28 (1966), 90-203 at 167): “Every knower who knows its own essence returns to its essence in a complete reversion” (*Omnis sciens qui scit essentiam suam est rediens ad essentiam suam reditione completa*).

reconciled to the necessary movement toward the good, insofar as the object of desire is not external to the soul itself.

This “Neoplatonic” or “Augustinian” gesture is not made in disagreement with Aristotle. Even leaving aside the question of Proclus’s own “Aristotelianism,” as well as the Aristotelian attribution under which Proclus’s words circulated, Bonaventure is careful to uphold the Aristotelian dictum that rationality is capable of contraries. The second argument for attributing free choice to animals observes that “a free power is one that is capable of opposites, and in brute animals there is a power to do opposing things, since sometimes they show kindness, sometimes ferocity; sometimes they are willful, and sometimes they respond and come.”<sup>24</sup> To this Bonaventure responds that animals clearly are not able to be moved to all opposites, “but only those which are below the dignity of free choice.” Free choice properly respects the *bonum honestum*, the same good which is also the proper object of synderesis.

However, although they have the same object, free choice and synderesis (or the natural will to the good) are not identical. The natural and the deliberative wills, after all, are not distinguished according to their objects, but by their mode of moving towards that object. This is how the honest good can here be classed as an *oppositum*. It is not that the Good itself has a contrary, but rather that the free soul may choose whether or not to pursue a particular act towards that Good. The desire for this Good is always present, yet the merit of attaining beatitude consists in choosing the acts and the objects that will lead

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<sup>24</sup> 2 *Sent.* d. 25, p. 1, art. un, q. 1 (Quarrachi II.592).

the soul to the Good it seeks. The will wills rightly when it consents to its own most fundamental desire.

The paradox, the point at which opposites coincide, is this desire--as desire for God's presence is never, as the *Itinerarium* makes clear, simply one's own. The will's self-consent (so to speak)--the fulfillment of the soul's capacity for free choice and reversion of the rational will to itself--is a state of being moved wholly by the soul's natural desire for the Good.<sup>25</sup> And to desire the Good, as the whole of the *Itinerarium* attests, is a movement within and ultimately above oneself, an ascent of the mind toward its own *excessus*. And in this ecstasy, deliberations cease. Thus the will's self-control comes to resemble nothing so much as the complete abandonment of that self-control to the Good, the object of the soul's most intimate and most excessive longing.<sup>26</sup>

If the distinction between rational will and irrational appetite is measured in the distance from an interior impulse to an external attraction, then the ecstatic character of the soul's desire--a desire which is both internal to the soul and which lifts the soul out of itself--cannot be understood in any straightforward way as rational. Animal affections are "more acted upon than acting." Divine desire, at the same time complete interiority and

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<sup>25</sup> Denys Turner makes a similar point in analyzing Pseudo-Dionysius's conception of *eros*: "Erotic love is necessity lived in the mode of freedom and freedom lived in the mode of necessity," *Eros and Allegory*, 59.

<sup>26</sup> Note the similarity to the account of reason's abandonment to ecstasy in Richard of St. Victor's *Benjamin Minor*.



complete exteriority, would seem for Bonaventure to be a state in which being acted upon and acting are the same movement.<sup>27</sup>

### 3. *Carried by Desire: Francis and the Legenda Maior*

In the previous chapter I suggested that because of the analogical structure of creation and the ecstatic character of desire, the transformation of affect that occurs in the *excessus mentis* is always already underway from the very beginning of ascent. That is, the soul, insofar as it is constituted by the desire for the good into which it is ultimately consumed, exceeds itself even as it remains possessed of its powers. If so, then according to the Seraphic movement of the *Itinerarium*, the transformation of the *affectus* that occurs in ecstatic union is already begun *in statu viatoris*. And the will's self-motion, ordained naturally and determinately to beatitude, is always also a kind of being moved. Given the prevalence of this theme in Bonaventure's exposition of Francis's Seraphic vision in the *Itinerarium*, it is not surprising that this dynamic appears in his account of Francis's life, the *Legenda Maior*, as well.

By the end of Bonaventure's *Legenda* it is clear that he has positioned the work as a kind of companion or hagiographical counterpart to the *Itinerarium*, echoing its seven-stage structure, whereby "through six stages you were led to the seventh in which at last

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<sup>27</sup> This paradox of interiority and exteriority is an echo of Dionysius's own understanding of God as ecstatic love, as Perl characterizes it: "In God as Love, therefore, pure interiority coincides with pure exteriority" (Perl, 46).

you have rest.”<sup>28</sup> Though the stages described in Francis’s life do not correspond one-to-one to the stages of the soul’s ascent in the *Itinerarium*, the seventh stage in which the affections are inflamed and transformed find a clear resonance in Francis’s seventh stage. This is the ecstatic Seraphic vision which leaves his body marked with the death he undergoes in taking on Christ’s passion.<sup>29</sup> Both the parallels in Bonaventure’s own text and the exemplary nature of Francis’s life and spiritual death invite the reader to examine how the desire which transforms the soul is manifested in Francis’s disposition and actions. In other words, Bonaventure frames the *Legenda Maior* as a model of what a soul carried along by desire towards God looks like.

For this reason the *Legenda* deserves attention alongside Bonaventure’s other works outlining the dynamics of the soul’s natural affection for God.<sup>30</sup> The *Life of Francis*, however, is more complicated as a source for Bonaventure’s thought.

Bonaventure was the third biographer of Francis, after the two *vitae* of Thomas of Celano and the *vita* of Julian of Speyer. And Bonaventure relied heavily on these previous accounts for his own, in many cases simply reproducing entire passages. Thus the

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<sup>28</sup> *Legenda Maior* XIII.10 (Quaracchi XIII.545). Translations are my own, but I have referred to the translation and notes by Ewert Cousins (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978), 177-327. For an analysis of the major themes and structure of the *Legenda*, see Regis J. Armstrong, “The Spiritual Theology of the *Legenda Major* of Saint Bonaventure (Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1978). Armstrong argues that the entire work is laid out according to the threefold pattern of purgation, illumination, and perfection (52-54).

<sup>29</sup> As Ann Astell nicely puts it, the *Itinerarium* and the *Legenda* provide “a kind of commentary on one another,” *Eating Beauty: The Eucharist and the Spiritual Arts of the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 104.

<sup>30</sup> I agree with Richard Emmerson and Ronald Herzmann’s contention that a careful reading of the *Legenda* reveals its “close connection with several of Bonaventure’s theological works, particularly with those emphasizing Christology, mysticism, and the meaning of salvation history,” *The Apocalyptic Imagination in Medieval Literature*, 44.

question of Bonaventure's authorial voice in the *Legenda* is a complicated one<sup>31</sup>--and rendered all the more complicated by of the circumstances of Bonaventure's compilation of the work (which included the heightening divisions within the order regarding Francis's intentions for the friars minor).<sup>32</sup> These authorial questions, however, do not discount the *Legenda* as a source for Bonaventure's thought, but rather make particularly visible the imbricated and situational nature of authority in all medieval theological works. Generic conventions, institutional exigencies, and the presence of other authorial voices in the text are constitutive of all of Bonaventure's writings. Reading them well is not a matter of discerning his authentic voice behind these circumstances, nor it is simply a task of explaining every assertion as a function of those authorial voices.

Rather than searching for the authentically Bonaventurian thought in his compilation of Francis's life, I suggest that the text as a whole be read for the ways in which it complicates and amplifies the ideas I have been tracing in Bonaventure's other works thus far. This involves, then, an exploration of how Francis's desire for God and

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<sup>31</sup> In his introduction to the text, Cousins provides a list of the material that is original to Bonaventure's *Legenda*, and gives detailed notes throughout his translation for Bonaventure's earlier sources (Cousins, *Bonaventure*, 39n74).

<sup>32</sup> See Cousins's introduction to his translation for a sketch of the historical circumstances of the *Legenda*'s composition (Cousins, *Bonaventure*, 37-42). Some historians in the twentieth century, interested in recovering the primitive Franciscan ideal, have criticized Bonaventure's version as unreliable, unoriginal, and less a historical document than a political intervention in the growing schism within the order. When it was approved as the official biography by the General Chapter of Paris in 1266, all earlier *vitae* were suppressed. Astell wryly suggests that the evident failure of the *Legenda* to produce that unity constitutes an argument for its historical veracity (Astell, *Eating Beauty*, 100n4). These debates are important, but for the present study the relation of the *Legenda* to Bonaventure's other writings is more important than its relation to the needs of the order in the thirteenth century.

his will to the good appear in the text. In this view the generic differences between the *Legenda* and the *Itinerarium* and Bonaventure's university texts are more pronounced than the differences in the authorial situation. In the *vita*, the pedagogical medium is neither the scholastic *quaestio* nor the mnemonic six-wing figure of the Seraph, but the embodied actions and appearance of a holy man. This is not a claim for the text's greater realism or relative lack of allegorization, but rather for a different form of theological expression. Because the subject is the person of Francis, desire in the *vita* can only appear in and through the human body. Perhaps one of the most remarkable aspects of the *Legenda* is its exploration of the ways in which the body *bears* the affections of desire and compassion. Francis's body is not only the sign of his ecstatic love--in the form of the stigmata of Christ's passion--but the site upon which it is enacted.

In the prologue Bonaventure gestures to the end of Francis's life, in which he was "given an angelic office, and was totally inflamed with a Seraphic fire. Like a hierarchic man, he was carried up (*sursum vectus*) in a fiery chariot."<sup>33</sup> Through the invocation of the Seraph and the description of Francis as a *vir hierarchicus*--a man whose soul has been made hierarchical through the threefold operation of purgation, illumination, and perfection--Bonaventure frames Francis's life in terms of the Dionysian ascent in the celestial hierarchy. In this way, he immediately establishes a link to the threefold Dionysian framework of his other writings, including not only the *Itinerarium*, but also *De Triplici Via* and the later *Collationes in Hexaemeron*.

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<sup>33</sup> "...angelico deputatus officio incendioque seraphico totus ignitus et ut vir hierarchicus curru igneo sursum vectus." *Legenda* Prol.1 (Quaracchi XIII.504).

Francis's angelic nature is not realized only at his stigmatization and death, however.<sup>34</sup> As the prologue goes on to explain, "while living among human beings he imitated angelic purity, by which he was made an example for perfect followers of Christ."<sup>35</sup> And though the story Bonaventure relates of Francis's life is one of progressive transformation, he establishes at the beginning of the narrative that the qualities that ordained Francis to an angelic office towards the end of his life were present from an early age. In the first chapter Bonaventure writes that even as a young man, Francis's heart was filled with a "generous compassion [*miseratio liberalis*] for the poor," such that when, on one occasion, after ignoring a beggar, he realized what he had done and ran to the man. Francis then resolved never to refuse a beggar again, and especially if that beggar appealed to divine love. He kept this promise and "merited a great increase of love and grace in God."<sup>36</sup> Here the interplay between Francis's inborn affective disposition and his great merit in doing good is established early in his life, and at the very beginning of Bonaventure's account. This disposition is moved not only by the sight of poverty but also at the sound of God's name: "Later, when he had perfectly put on Christ, he would say that even while remaining in his worldly habit, he was almost never able to hear someone mention divine love without being changed in his heart (*sine cordis immutatione*)."<sup>37</sup> As described here, Francis's compassion for the poor and his special

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<sup>34</sup> Nor are the angelic associations limited to the Dionysian hierarchy. In the prologue Bonaventure writes that Francis is symbolized by the "angel who ascends from the sunrise bearing the seal of the living God" depicted in Rev. 6.12. Richard Emmerson and Ronald Herzman analyze this symbol and its apocalyptic resonances in *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 36-75.

<sup>35</sup> *Legenda* Prol.2 (Quaracchi XIII.504).

<sup>36</sup> *Legenda* 1.1 (Quaracchi XIII.506).

affection for the love of God are rooted in a single inborn disposition. In striking terms Bonaventure states that this disposition was natural to Francis, present in him before his perfection by grace: “He possessed an inborn sympathy, which was doubled by the infused holiness of Christ. Therefore his soul melted (*liquescebat*) for the poor and infirm, and he extended his affection (*affectum*) even for those to whom he was not able to extend his hand.” Here Bonaventure clearly distinguishes a natural affective tendency from the superadded (*superinfusa*) love which intensifies and perfects Francis’s innate compassion, extending the reach of his affection even beyond the reach of his hand.<sup>37</sup>

That Francis’s life bears witness to the unity of love of God and compassion for God’s creation is a hallmark of devotion to Francis, both medieval and modern. But reading the *Legenda* alongside Bonaventure’s other writings about the *affectus*, it becomes clear just how deep that connection runs in Bonaventure’s understanding of creation and the nature of the soul. As he writes, “True holiness, which according to the Apostle is good for all things, so filled Francis’s heart and penetrated his flesh (*viscera*) that it seemed to have claimed (*vindicasse*) the man of God totally to its rule. This is what drew (*agebat*) him to God through devotion, transformed him into Christ through compassion, inclined (*inclinabat*) him to his neighbor through lowering himself (*condescensionem*), and refashioned him to a state of innocence through the universal

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<sup>37</sup> *Legenda* 8.5 (Quaracchi XIII.543). This section is original to Bonaventure’s *vita*.

reconciliation of every creature.”<sup>38</sup> The same spirit which carried him to God and inclined him to his neighbor also restored in him the original rectitude of creation. All of the language here is reminiscent of Bonaventure’s descriptions of the movement of synderesis--a movement which lifts the soul to God and inclines it to every Good as such (the *bonum honestum*), and is that by which human beings remain upright as they were before sin. Bonaventure presents Francis as one whose natural affect was so strong, or whose will was so bent back upon his inborn love for God, that he seemed to be driven entirely by this natural affective spark. Not incidentally, it is this same Francis who is depicted earlier as praying incessantly with the “unutterable groanings” of the spirit--groans which Bonaventure in his *Sentences* commentary attributes to synderesis.

For all of the displays of virtue and good works that appear in the *Legenda*, the picture that emerges of Francis is of one who “is more acted upon than acting,” with passive verb forms repeatedly used to underscore the ease with which Francis is moved by his desire for God and for the poor. Moreover, the question of Francis’s restraint is raised on several occasions. In the first chapter Francis is praying alone when Jesus appears to him on the cross. At the sight (*conspectum*) of this, Francis’s soul melts, and “the memory of Christ’s passion was so impressed into the marrow of the flesh of his heart (*visceribus cordis medullitus*), that from that moment whenever Christ on the cross

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<sup>38</sup> “Pietas vera, quae secundum Apostolum ad omnia valet, adeo cor Francisci repleverat ac penetraverat viscera, ut totum videretur virum Dei in suum dominium vindicasse. Haec est, quae ipsum per devotionem sursum agebat in Deum, per compassionem transformabat in Christum, per condescensionem inclinabat ad proximum et per universalem conciliationem ad singula refigurabat ad innocentiae statum,” *Legenda* 8.1 (Quaracchi XIII.526).

came to mind, he could scarcely (*vix*) restrain his outward tears and sighs.”<sup>39</sup> The interior affections, spurred by the sight of Christ crucified before his mind, are so overwhelming, that he is almost--though not quite--completely overtaken by them to the point of tears. Tears are a common sight for those in the presence of Francis, so much so that they eventually cause a disease in his eyes. When his doctor warns him to hold back his tears in order to preserve his vision, Francis replies that celestial vision is to be preferred over “the light which we have in common with flies.” In this way, Bonaventure explains, Francis prefers to go blind from tears, “by which the interior eye is purified so that it may see God,” than to impede the spirit by repressing his fervor.<sup>40</sup> Here it appears that Francis is to be revered for his decision not to restrain his affect as it manifests itself in excessive tears. Could he? In this instance Francis chooses to give free rein to the impulses of desire which threaten to overwhelm him. His exercise of choice--and thus his virtue--lies in surrendering to an affective devotion in both its inward and outward manifestations.

This is not the first instance of Francis’s body being afflicted with devotion. While he is still involved with the affairs of his father’s business, and has “not yet learned to contemplate heavenly things and had not acquired a taste for divine things,” God afflicts his body with a long illness, in order to prepare his soul for being anointed by the Holy Spirit.<sup>41</sup> The bodily illness wears off eventually, but the interior change it effects is

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<sup>39</sup> *Legenda* 1.5 (Quaracchi XIII.507).

<sup>40</sup> *Legenda* 5.8 (Quaracchi XIII.518).

<sup>41</sup> “...nondum didicerat contemplari caelestia nec assueverat degustare divina. Et quia spirituali auditui dat intellectum inflicta vexatio, facta est super eum manus Domini et immutatio dexteræ Excelsi, diutinis languoribus ipsius corpus affligens, ut coaptaret animam ad sancti Spiritus unctionem,” *Legenda* 1.2 (Quaracchi XIII.506).



terminal. Upon recovering his strength he sees a poor and ragged knight in the street. Moved (*affectu*) to compassion over the man's poverty, Francis immediately removes his clothes and gives them to the man. This foreshadows Francis's more dramatic disrobing in the presence of his father later on. But the episode on its own also dramatically illustrates the way in which God's compassion is conducted, in a sense, through and in the body of Francis. The compassion of God first appears as physical illness, then moves to effect an interior awakening of compassion. Finally, when Francis is moved by the sight of suffering, it manifests itself again outwardly in the nakedness of Francis's body.

The *Legenda*'s concern for visibility is surely in part a function of the forensic demands that such a text must satisfy. This is true, of course, of hagiographical writing in general. But it is especially the case in Francis's *vita*, which, Bonaventure writes, he was commissioned to produce by the General Chapter of Norbonne in 1260 (only a year after the date he gives for the inspiration of the *Itinerarium*, indicating that the two texts are very closely contemporary). Bonaventure's *vita* was to be the authoritative account of Francis's life, a unifying document meant to set to rest the divisions within the order about the true nature of Francis's life and the community of his followers. As Bonaventure writes in the prologue, "In order to establish with greater clarity and certainty the true facts of his life to hand down to posterity, I have visited his place of birth, the places in which he lived, and the site of the death (*transitus*) of this blessed man and have had thorough conversations with those still living who were close to him, and especially with those who were most familiar with his holiness and were its closest

followers.”<sup>42</sup> As in the visit to La Verna which Bonaventure relates in his prologue to the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure again puts himself in Francis’s place--as the locus of true authority about Francis’s life and death and also as witness to Francis’s holiness in Bonaventure’s own body. He relates that when he was a child, he “was saved from the jaws of death through the invocation of Francis and his merits.” Thus, in gratitude he seeks to gather the true accounts of Francis’s life, for, he writes, “I recognize that I have experienced his power in my very self.” Francis’s spiritual power inhabits Bonaventure, and Bonaventure inhabits the text that follows, either as eyewitness to the site or as recipient of the report of Francis’s holiness, compassion, and spiritual fervor.

The physicality of Francis’s concourse with God is stressed even in the absence of witnesses, as in the pivotal vision in the Church of San Damiano.<sup>43</sup> Francis is praying with his head inclined towards a crucifix, his eyes characteristically filled with tears, when he hears “with his bodily ears” a voice coming from the cross, telling him to restore the Lord’s house. He eventually sets about restoring the church building, only later realizing the spiritual meaning of Christ’s command. But immediately upon hearing that voice--and before he acts--he begins to tremble. Receiving the power of divine speech in his heart, he is “carried out of himself in an ecstasy of mind (*mentis alienatur excessu*).” The entire scene is structured on the dialectic of body and spirit. Francis is made to tremble as the words that strike his ears are commuted to divine power in his heart, so that he loses his bodily senses. And from mental ecstasy he returns to act, first building a physical structure that itself signifies the spiritual renewal to come.

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<sup>42</sup> *Legenda* Prol.4 (Quaracchi XIII.505).

<sup>43</sup> *Legenda* 2.1 (Quaracchi XIII.507-8).

The authenticity of this story derives not from an external witness to the event, but from Francis's own report to his followers later in life. Had there been a witness, how would Francis's ecstasy have appeared? Bonaventure affirms that there is a sensible effect of the *excessus mentis* when he describes Francis's follower Giles of Assisi as being frequently "rapt in God in ecstasies, as I myself have truly observed as an eyewitness (*ego ipse oculata fide conspexi*)."<sup>44</sup> Only later episodes from Francis's life give an indication of what it was like to see him in the full ecstasy of love. His body weakened by age and the rigors of his devotion, Bonaventure reports that "he was often suspended in such an excess of contemplation that, rapt above himself and feeling (*sentiens*) something beyond human understanding (*ultra humanum sensum*), he was unaware of what was going on around him."<sup>45</sup> On one occasion, as he was riding on a donkey through the busy town of Borgo Santo Sepolcro, he was thronged by devoted followers. "He was pulled and held back by them, and pushed here and there and touched many times, but he seemed unaware of all of it, and paid attention to nothing, just as if he were a dead corpse." And in an unusually cinematic scene, Bonaventure depicts Francis praying alone at night in the woods, beating his chest, groaning, and "watering the place with his tears." Onlookers glimpse him "with his hands extended in the shape of a cross, his entire body raised up from the ground and a cloud shining around him."<sup>46</sup> The outward light exhibits the illumination of his soul, but his posture is that of a man

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<sup>44</sup> *Legenda* 3.4 (Quaracchi XIII.510).

<sup>45</sup> *Legenda* 10.2 (Quaracchi XIII.533).

<sup>46</sup> *Legenda* 10.4 (Quaracchi XIII.534).

crucified. As in the scene at Santo Sepolcro, the physical presence of Francis in ecstasy of mind is a body of death--insensate and inanimate.

The figure of death gestures forward to the climactic episode on Mount La Verna in which Francis's vision of the cruciform Seraph leaves him branded with the wounds of Christ's passion. Around two years before his death, Bonaventure writes, Francis asked a friend to open the book of the Gospels three times. Each time, the book opened to reveal the account of Christ's passion. Francis then became filled with a desire for martyrdom, as "the unquenchable fire of his love for the good Jesus had risen up in him into such a torch of flames that many waters could not quench such a strong love." This love, described in language from the *Song of Songs*, will be the instrument of Francis's spiritual martyrdom, the flame that consumes his soul. But the vision of the Seraph itself elicits more than simple *caritas* in Francis. "By the Seraphic ardor of his desires he was being raised above (*ageretur*) into God, and by sweet compassion he was being transformed into him who chose to be crucified on account of his excessive love (*ex caritate nimia*)." The vision of the Seraph is glorious, but the vision of the crucifix is pitiable. "Seeing it, he was powerfully overcome, and a mix of joy and grief flooded his heart. He rejoiced in the gracious expression with which Christ, in the form of the Seraph, looked at him, but that he was affixed to a cross pierced Francis's soul with a sword of compassionate sorrow."<sup>47</sup> Affective death *in excessus mentis* is at once greatest joy and

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<sup>47</sup> *Legenda* 13.3 (Quaracchi XIII.543). Jill Bennett suggests that this passage reveals the close association between sensory vision and affective transformation in medieval psychology, "Stigmata and Sense Memory: St. Francis and the Affective Image," *Art History* 24.1 (February 2001), 1-16.

greatest pain, a violent overthrow of human understanding and an elevation to the place of Christ himself.

The sublime ambivalence that consumes Francis's soul and leaves his heart ablaze at the same time pierces and tears his body as well. The wounds left by his vision are referred to as "stigmata," but they are more than signifying marks. The wounds he sustains transform his body, rendering him a living corpse: a wound in his side bleeds continuously, with blood real enough to wet and stain his clothes. On his hands and feet are not only wounds, but miraculous nails protruding from his flesh so that he can no longer walk for himself. Thus, in the last years of his life, in the glory of his martyrdom, Francis's dying body (*corpus emortuum*) must be carried by his friends through the streets, exhibited like a corpse while still living.

In this way, Francis's body is a martyr to his inflamed soul.<sup>48</sup> But to what perfection does his dying, nearly immobile body witness? Francis himself provides an interpretation of this sign earlier in the *Legenda* in a discussion of obedience. Here the *exanime corpus* appears, foreshadowing Francis's own later martyrdom:

Once when he was asked who should be judged truly obedient, he gave as an example (*pro exemplo*) the image of a dead body. "Take a corpse, (*exanime corpus*)" he said, "and place it where you like! You will see that it puts up no resistance to motion (*non repugnare motum*), nor does it grumble about its position, or complain when it is put aside. If it is propped up on a throne, it does not raise its head up, but rather looks down. If it is clothed in purple, it will look twice as pale. 'This', Francis said, 'is the truly obedient one, who does not judge (*diiudicat*) why he is moved, and does not care where he is placed. He does not demand to be transferred. If he is appointed to an office, he retains his usual humility. The more he is honored, the more he counts himself unworthy'.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> On Francis's wounds as a visible "index of *affectus*," see Bennett, 14.

<sup>49</sup> *Legenda* 6.4 (Quaracchi XIII.520).

There are many reasons to wonder at this passage. Most simply, the example is a graphic illustration of the virtue of humility. At the same time, the darkly comic image of a corpse slumped on a throne, neck slack and draped in purple, is a trenchant mockery of the pretensions of worldly glory. Yet the power of the image itself is heightened by the rhetorical context in which it appears. Francis presents this image in response to a group of his followers seeking an example, a model of perfect obedience to be imitated. Francis, the exemplar of true obedience, offers an example of obedience that reflects a pale light back onto himself. His life is a movement toward perfection in death, his gradual transformation into the macabre image he presents here. And at the same time the corpse offers a proleptic glimpse of Francis's own living yet martyred body--a body which is always also the appearance of Christ's crucified body. Francis is offering himself as the example of perfect obedience, while at the same time offering a lens through which to understand his virtue.

In what does this virtue consist? The lifeless body, or, literally, the body without a soul (*exanime corpus*), not only does not judge (*diudicat*) where it is moved, but even has no will of its own with which to move itself. The body as *speculum* reflects Francis as one who has surrendered the will entirely, or, in view of Francis's ecstatic "conflagration," one whose will has been wholly consumed by desire. Francis's dying body makes visible the consummation of love. No less that three times in the ninth chapter (which recounts Francis's fervent love for Christ), Francis is described as being "carried" (*ferebatur*)--by *affectus*, by *devotio caritatis*, and by *desiderio*.<sup>50</sup> His soul puts

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<sup>50</sup> *Legenda* 9.2, 9.4, and 9.6, respectively (Quaracchi XIII.530-32).

up no resistance. It is moved like a body, an example of perfect obedience and consummate desire.<sup>51</sup>

#### 4. *To Take Place: Francis among the animals*

Bonaventure's account of Francis does more than simply render desire visible. In the *Itinerarium* Bonaventure writes that Francis's *transitus* made him the example of perfect contemplation--such that all spiritual persons are invited not simply to imitate Francis's *transitus*, but to pass over themselves *through* Francis. The soul passes *with* and *through* Francis into spiritual ecstasy and the conflagration of the soul. Francis is the example of this passing over; and for Bonaventure, an exemplar is much more than a didactic convenience for the cultivation of virtue. As he writes in the prologue to the *Breviloquium* (describing scripture's *modus tractandi*), "the affect is moved to examples more than to arguments, to promised rewards more than to ratiocination, and through

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<sup>51</sup> Elsewhere Bonaventure characterizes obedience as a matter of being moved by grace. Cf. *Comm. in Eccl.* 2 (Quaracchi VI.25): "It must be said that to follow God through being equal to God is not given to any creature. And since Satan wanted this, he fell. But one can also follow through subjection and obedience, and this is possible for human beings: Not whoever wishes, but those to whom it is given by God through grace, and whom he draws. And thus no one through themselves is able to follow without God's help."

devotion more than through definitions.”<sup>52</sup> An *exemplum* is not simply that which instructs the soul in how to act, but is also that which moves and draws the soul affectively to itself. Francis’s desire makes him the exemplary subject of the soul’s desire for God, and in turn transforms him into its object as well. In his trip through Borgo Santo Sepolcro,<sup>53</sup> when Francis is perched like an inanimate body on his donkey, lost in ecstasy and pushed and pulled by the townspeople, he is not the only figure in the scene drawn by love. “The crowds rushed toward him out of devotion,” the account reads. But the multiple vectors of love ultimately miss each other in this scene. The crowds are drawn toward Francis even as he is drawn up in love and contemplation to God--the present and absent object of their devotion, unaware of his surroundings and yet entirely acquiescent to their physical demands.

Francis’s powers of attraction are nowhere more evident than in the celebrated stories of his interactions with animals, both in the *vitae* and the *fioretti*.<sup>54</sup> They present Francis as a figure of exceptional compassion and gentleness. In Bonaventure’s

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<sup>52</sup> “Et quia affectus ad exempla quam ad argumenta, magis ad promissiones quam ad ratiocinationes, magis per devotiones quam per definitiones...” *Breviloquium*, Prol.5.2. (Quaracchi V.206). That the affect is moved both to examples and to promised rewards amounts, according to a standard scholastic account of human motivation, to the same thing. In both cases, the example and the reward, it is a matter of an *end* moving the soul to act--in the first case, perfect imitation of Francis, which is imitation of Christ, is the end to which the example moves the soul. In the second case, the promised reward is not other than Christ, the beloved with whom the soul is united in spiritual perfection. Cf. *Collationes de decem praeceptis* 1.1 (Quaracchi V.507): “And this is the proper order, that the end moves the agent, so that agent might work to the proper end.”

<sup>53</sup> *Legenda* 10.2 (Quaracchi XIII.533)

<sup>54</sup> A comprehensive study of the animal stories and their context is Edward Armstrong, *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic: The Derivation and Significance of the Nature Stories in the Franciscan Legend* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973).



renditions, the stories of Francis ministering to animals reflect also Francis's understanding of the structure of vestige, image, and likeness whereby all creation testifies to God as its cause: "When he considered the primal origin of all things, he was filled with even greater piety, calling all creatures, however small, 'brother' and 'sister', for he knew that they had the same principle as he himself did."<sup>55</sup> In addition, Bonaventure adds another interpretive gloss on these stories, supplementing his source material with two additional anecdotes concerning lambs, since "he embraced more warmly (*viscerosius*) and sweetly those creatures which present a natural likeness of Christ's gentle mercy and represent him in scriptural signification." The animal in question is not a mere brute beast, but an allegorical stand-in for Christ. In addition, the story of a falcon waking Francis for divine office signifies in Bonaventure's account Francis's eventual elevation in contemplation and Seraphic vision. But even so, Bonaventure includes more in these stories than an affirmation of God's universal causality and Francis allegorical imagination. The falcon, for example, remains with Francis because he is attached to him in friendship (*magno se illi amicitiae foedere copulavit*). Birds, hares, and even a fish are drawn powerfully to Francis's presence. He is also given a pheasant who "clung to him with such affection that it would in no way suffer to be separated from him."<sup>56</sup> Whenever the pheasant was placed outside, it returned immediately to Francis, and when it was given away, it refused food until it was returned to Francis, upon which it recovered its joy and its appetite.

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<sup>55</sup> *Legenda* 8.6 (Quaracchi XIII.527).

<sup>56</sup> *Legenda* 8.10 (Quaracchi XIII.529).

These miracle stories illustrate Francis's extraordinary holiness and compassion, rather than the extraordinary virtue of the animals. The animals do not cling to Francis by a resolve of their will, but by a natural filial attraction to his love. And so in their response to Francis's affective fervor, they also reflect it back upon him, just as the pliable corpse reflects Francis's obedience and humility. They are more acted upon than acting. But in the devotion of the birds and hares and fish, the purity of Francis's own affection for Christ is manifest, and the animals themselves, through Francis's exemplary love, become examples of devotion. Francis becomes the figure and presence of Christ among the lower creatures. In a dynamic that could rightly be called analogical, Francis takes the place of Christ in these stories, as the animals take the place of Francis. For Bonaventure, analogy, like hierarchy, is a dynamic relationship that draws each stage of creation to its own excess. Thus, Francis does not simply represent Christ, he takes the place of, *becomes* Christ through the force of his love. And the reader, for whom Francis appears as the desirous and desirable object of the *Legenda Maior*, is moved and transformed into Francis. Analogy is not simply a representational strategy but a devotional technique ordered by affect. As the motive principle of the rational and irrational soul alike, the affect moves the soul to that which it loves. As the unitive principle, affect is that by which the lover and the beloved are joined as one, and that which transforms the lover into its beloved. The movement of exemplarity is the affective movement to the place of the exemplar.

In the displacement that occurs, subject becomes object, lover becomes beloved, the moved becomes the mover. For Francis to follow the example of Christ means to take

the place of Christ by being drawn into and transformed into him through affection, and as exemplar Francis functions in the same role for “all spiritual persons.” For Bonaventure, exemplarism names both the metaphysical relationship of all things to their source, and the devotional technique by which the reader is transformed through love. The animals only gesture towards the outer limits of exemplarity’s reach. The love that draws Francis to Christ and the love that draws the animals to Francis is not irrational any more than it is an act of human reason. All things are drawn back to their source by the moving and unifying force of desire--witnessed in and transferred through the body of Francis--powerful as fire and inexorable as death.

### Conclusion: Motives in History

Much of the recent scholarly attention to late medieval “affective piety” has largely discounted Bonaventure’s importance for the increased emphasis on affect, and especially love, in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century devotional practices. Sarah McNamer, in her illuminating study of the literature and practice of compassionate meditation on Christ’s passion in late medieval Europe, has argued that Bonaventure’s meditative writings should be distinguished from the kinds of texts--many of which, like the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, circulated under his name in the later middle ages--which graphically portray Jesus’s human suffering in order to elicit a compassionate, emotional response in the reader. In Bonaventure’s texts, such as the *Lignum vitae*, she writes, “affective response is assertively situated within a framework of speculative theology; thus the texts seek to engage the reader’s intellect more than the heart, and the apprehension of theological truth is the ultimate aim.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Bonaventure’s writings are situated in an elaborate theological framework, and while he describes union as a state that excludes intellectual operations, those operations are certainly crucial to the pedagogical program of his writings. McNamer carefully distinguishes the Passion meditation genre she analyzes and the rhetorical appeals to pity and compassion they contain. But the relative lack of direct “emotional” appeals in Bonaventure’s writing constitutes in McNamer’s judgment a *containment* of “affectivity.” Yet emotion and affect are surely not identical. In fact, one of the implicit arguments of the preceding chapters is that medieval *affectus* includes far more (and in certain respects, less) than the

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 90.

modern term “emotion.” The supposition of an antagonism between a “theological framework” and “affective response” articulates the wide gap between this conception of emotion and medieval Christian conceptions of affectivity.

McNamer locates her work in a growing field of medieval scholarship grouped under the label of the “history of emotions”--an interdisciplinary effort to take seriously the role that emotions and affectivity play in historical movements and social structures, to understanding emotions themselves as historically conditioned and contingent, and to exploring how varieties of emotion emerge and shift over time. As a cultural and literary history of compassion, McNamer’s book argues that the cultivation of compassion in later medieval religious women’s devotion to Christ’s passion developed as a strategic means of vouchsafing their own legal status as “brides of Christ.” She does not mean to suggest by this that the emotions were insincere, but simply that they had a purpose, a deliberateness, a certain rationality. Compassion in the context of meditation on Christ’s passion, McNamer argues, served a very specific social function and served religious women as a tool for achieving recognition in their vocation. As in many of the examples Rosenwein cites approvingly in her essay, McNamer’s historiography of emotion proceeds by seeking, as she acknowledges, a motive for particular emotional complexes, as a corrective against a historiographical credulousness that accepts emotional utterances in texts as simple expressions of interiority.

McNamer’s analysis of the social, rhetorical, and performative dimensions of medieval compassion is important. The emphasis on the performativity of emotions is helpful, insofar as a rigorous conception of performativity offers a way in which to

understand the means by which signs (including, here, emotions and devotional acts) circulate without imputing those signs to intentional subjects, or to an uncritical notion of rational agency. McNamer's phrase for the affective techniques of late medieval Passion devotion, "intimate scripts," suggests the ways in which religious emotions were both interior and determined by a larger matrix of culture, language, and gender expectations in medieval European society.<sup>2</sup>

Yet alongside the emphasis on the performative aspects of emotions and the "intimate scripts" through which they circulated, McNamer advances a more traditionally historical argument. Medieval affective piety, she argues, has never been properly understood while it remained the province of theologians and scholars of religion, who have tended to take the literary language of affectivity at face value and neglected the analytical tools of literary studies. Contrary to this theology-centric narrative of medieval Christian affective devotion, she argues that the techniques for cultivating particular emotion in meditation were not the innovations of a handful of male theologians (John of Fécamp, Anselm, Francis, Bonaventure). Rather, these practices were in the first instance developed in women's religious communities for the performance of the emotional responses proper to a true *sponsa Christi*. The women religious at the center of these devotional practices thus had a clear motive, "an overarching, historically specific goal," for cultivating compassion, since the presence of this emotion functioned as a claim for their social and spiritual status as brides.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the concept of performativity as a lens through which to understand the overdetermination and circulation of particular

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<sup>2</sup> McNamer, 12.

<sup>3</sup> McNamer, 84.

emotional regimes is in danger of collapsing into a simple notion of performance, where emotions become so many more means of exercising rational agency towards a determinate goal.

This slippage, I suggest, is not the product of the way in which McNamer develops her thesis, but a consequence of a more general ambiguity in contemporary historical approaches to emotion. Barbara Rosenwein, in her 2002 essay “Worrying About Emotions in History,” posits the emergence of a new history of emotions that takes as its starting point two developments in the contemporary theorization of affectivity that open up new ways of approaching emotions.<sup>4</sup> First, she writes, cognitive scientists have demonstrated that affective response is part of a cognitive process of perception and judgment. Second, anthropologists and social scientists have argued that emotions are culturally variable and conditioned by cultural expectations, values, and language. Both these approaches, Rosenwein argues, have helped to discredit what she calls the “hydraulic” model of emotions--a nineteenth-century view of emotions as a kind of undifferentiated substance that must be either released or repressed. While acknowledging that this model has roots in medieval theories of the humors, she pins the persistence of the hydraulic model in modernity primarily on Freud, as well as Darwin.

Rosenwein’s programmatic essay, as well as her own research on what she calls “emotional communities,” has proven fruitful for the study of the middle ages and of medieval religion in particular. She has offered a persuasive critique of the still all-too prevalent characterization of the middle ages as an unenlightened age of unchecked

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<sup>4</sup> Barbara Rosenwein, “Worrying About Emotions in History,” *The American Historical Review* 107.3 (Jun. 2002), 821-45.

emotion--as though medieval affect were both purer and more puerile than modern emotion. And she has helped to initiate a greater critical awareness of the historical specificity of emotion that understands affectivity not as a physiological given but as a contextually specific medium of social politics and for the varied performance of gender, cultural, and religious identifications.

Yet in arguing for the historical specificity of particular emotional complexes, Rosenwein's essay, and the scholarship it has helped inspire, risks losing sight of the historical variability of the very concepts of "emotion" and "affectivity" themselves. A model which understands emotions as "among the tools with which we manage social life as a whole" has the advantage of analytical flexibility--these tools can function differently in different contexts, and as responses to particular social and historical exigencies.<sup>5</sup> But the assumption that emotions *are* tools or strategies may be more convenient to contemporary concerns about the efficacy of emotions than to the complex ways that affectivity has been understood and embodied in different cultural situations.

Surveying recent theoretical efforts to "recuperate" emotion as a valuable means of social and political intervention, Sara Ahmed writes, "Within contemporary culture, emotions may even be represented as good or better than thought, but only insofar as they are re-presented as a form of intelligence, as 'tools' that can be used by subjects in the project of life and career enhancement. If good emotions are cultivated, and are worked on and towards, then they remain defined against uncultivated or unruly emotions, which frustrate the formation of the competent self."<sup>6</sup> Does the project of exposing the social

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<sup>5</sup> Rosenwein, "Worrying About Emotions," 842.

<sup>6</sup> Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.



and political functions of historical emotions not participate (albeit from a very different perspective) in the same framework of “good” and “bad” emotions by which earlier generations of scholarship disparaged the emotionalism of medieval cultures?

Rosenwein’s essay roundly rejects the enterprise of sorting out salubrious and destructive emotions in medieval history, and forcefully argues against the periodization of Western history on the basis of an emotional maturation at a societal level. But distinguishing good and bad models of emotion (where the good model is informed by contemporary anthropology and cognitive science) recapitulates the triumph of modern rationality over medieval emotionalism. Here, a modern *theory* of emotion reveals a truth that medieval understandings of affect obscure.

One of the points I am making is that, in its efforts to recuperate affectivity from the judgment of its irrationality, the study of medieval emotion has disregarded an aspect of affectivity that has in most periods of Western thought been painfully obvious, an insight that contemporary clichés routinely confess: affections such as love and fear are what *move* us--they push and pull us to act, make us cling to what we love and flee what we fear. To put it even more plainly, *affection* is a word that describes the way things are *affected*--acted upon, impinged upon, touched. To undertake the historiography of medieval affectivity from the assumption that emotions are tools for managing individual, collective, and political life is not only anachronistic, but it misses what makes the affective so unsettling and so potent for medieval Christian practice and theological reflection on that practice. Love and hate and hope and fear do not *feel* like the tools we deploy, but like the forces that come over us. To say that affections push and pull calls to

mind the “hydraulic” (Freudian) model of emotion that Rosenwein criticizes. This is not to argue that a psychoanalytic conception of affectivity is the best lens through which to interpret medieval languages of affect, but rather to suggest that even “models” of emotion have histories worth telling. To approach medieval writing about affect with the assumption of their strategic function or rationality is to foreclose the extraordinary volume of theological and practical reflection on the relationship between affect, rationality, and agency that continues to shape our own understandings of affectivity.

Admittedly, a first-person plural appeal to familiar sentiments about love and fear risks blunting the critical edge of Rosenwein’s essay, and once again artificially extracting affectivity from the contingencies of history--precisely the scholarly operation which recent historians of emotion have rightly sought to counteract. My hope is that by discussing love and fear I am making reference not to transhistorical human experiences, but to a variable and contested language for reflecting on and shaping affective experience. A host of recent theoretical work has insisted that the language of affect is a language of force, of contact, and, despite all the transformations and abstractions to which the word has been subject, of bodies. As Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg write, “Affect, at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces--visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion-that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world’s

apparent intractability.”<sup>7</sup> The language of affectivity: a language for speaking about how bodies interact and act upon one another, as well as a means *by which* bodies converse and register the impact of the other. This is not to say that affect is best understood on the model of or analogy to language, but that language and affect name two different but imbricated means of contact between bodies.

I do not mean to imply that such language is spontaneous, fully translatable, or simply expressive of interior feelings. To touch down in Christian language of affectivity at any point in history is, as I have tried to show, to be confronted with multiple and tangled threads of exegetical and theological tradition as well as the various Christian discursive practices in which theological reflection participates. In approaching Bonaventure’s work through the lens of affectivity I have attempted to follow several of those threads and explicate some of those practices. The reflections on *affectus* that I have examined here will not provide or even form the basis of a more perfect model of affectivity, and much less a theory of emotion. Contrary to the prevailing trend in the historiography of medieval emotion, *affectus* as Bonaventure understands it does not constitute a set of tools to be taken up for determinate devotional, social, or political ends. But if attention to the paradoxes and reversals of affect helps to pry apart assumptions about agency, rationality, and emotion, it will have nevertheless proven useful.

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<sup>7</sup> “An Inventory of Shimmers,” in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Gregg and Seigworth (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 1-25 at 1.

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